



OTS Grants Materials Approval Process Guidelines and FAQs

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Introduction

The following guidelines are for all the OTS grant-related activities. This document is intended to assist grantees in understanding the approval and review process for materials that are used as part of education and enforcement programs funded by the OTS. It also provides further clarification on media requirements for OTS grants, as well as what the OTS Communications & Public Affairs team and OTS grant coordinators are looking for from grantees during the approval and review process.

Approval Process

The OTS PIO is responsible for approving the **design and content** of educational materials. Approval of grant budget expenditure **must** come from your OTS Coordinator.

1. Send all media advisories, alerts, videos, graphics, artwork, posters, radio/PSA/video scripts, storyboards, presentations, digital and/or print educational materials for grant-related activities to the OTS PIO at pio@ots.ca.gov for approval and copy your OTS grant coordinator. Always copy your OTS grant coordinator on any approval request. This allows your grant coordinator to approve the purchase of materials and be aware of planned grant activities that are publicized to the public and media.
2. The OTS PIO will evaluate the materials based on content and design, ensuring that the materials include the OTS logo and funding language, space permitting.
3. The OTS grant coordinator will review and approve the budget expenditure, determining whether the cost is allowable and reasonable for the grant objective(s).
4. Approval from the OTS grant coordinator for expenditure does not authorize the use of the material. The materials must still be approved by the OTS PIO before distribution.
5. Drafts or rough cuts of digital, printed, recorded or video materials such as brochures, posters, scripts, artwork, trailer graphics, digital graphics, and social graphics or videos connected to a paid media campaign should also be sent to the OTS PIO at pio@ots.ca.gov and copied to your OTS grant coordinator for review and approval.

Timeline

Optimum lead time to review and approve materials is **seven (7) business days** before the scheduled release date, but at least **three (3) business days** before the scheduled release date is appreciated. The OTS PIO and OTS grant coordinator will do their best to respond to approval requests within **two (2) business days**. This timeline is not required but recommended to ensure sufficient lead time to review.

Materials Required for Approval

- Kick-off press release, whether OTS-supplied or written by the grantee.
- Any OTS-supplied template, educational material, social media graphic, post or video that is **substantially** changed.
- Non-OTS developed news releases, advisories, print and digital materials, scripts or storyboards for radio and video PSAs, trailer graphics, banners, flyers, posters and education presentations.

- Any print materials, PSAs, graphics or grant-funded social media, radio or TV campaign designed or developed through the use of contractual services and subgrantee.
- Any news releases, work plans, scripts, storyboards, artwork, graphics, videos, presentations, or educational/informational materials that received OTS PIO approval in a previous grant year must be resubmitted for approval in the current grant year.

Exemptions from Pre-Approval Process

- Use of any OTS-supplied templates (except kick-off release) for media advisories, news releases, social media graphics, videos or posts, or any other OTS-supplied educational material such as a tip card, fact sheet, or poster that is not substantially changed or edited.
- Time-sensitive enforcement activities (probation/warrant sweeps, court stings or other activity that is embargoed or could impact operations by publicizing in advance).
- Presentations for enforcement trainings (I.e. DRE, ARIDE), Child Passenger Safety Technician (CPST) certification/recertification courses.
- Social media posts that are **NOT** part of any earned or paid media campaign of a specific grant objective, using OTS grant funds or designed and developed using contractual services by a subgrantee.
 - Examples of social media post **exemptions** to pre-approval process include:
 - Posts highlighting state or national traffic safety campaigns such as Distracted Driving Awareness Month, Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month, Pedestrian Safety Month, etc.
 - Grant-related time-sensitive activity such as bicycle rodeos, car seat checks, community presentations, education events or trainings.
 - Any grant-related enforcement operations, such as DUI checkpoints, saturation patrols, bicycle/pedestrian safety, etc.
- News releases and alerts on platforms such as NextDoor and Nixle reporting immediate and time-sensitive grant activities such as enforcement operations, day of event highlights or announcements and event invites.

While all of the above are exemptions to the pre-approval process, grantees should still notify the OTS PIO at pio@ots.ca.gov and copy their OTS grant coordinator when distributing to the public and media.

Use of OTS Logo and Standard Funding Language

The following standard funding language, space permitting, should be included on all news releases, advisories and printed materials: ***Funding for this program was provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.*** For Spanish materials: ***Financiamiento para este programa fue proporcionado por una subvención de la Oficina de Seguridad Vial de California, a través de la Administración de Seguridad Vial Nacional.***

Space permitting, include the square **color** OTS logo on all grant-funded print materials, graphics and paid or earned social media campaigns tied to a grant objective or developed by a subgrantee or through contractual services. If the material has a dark color background that makes the color OTS logo difficult to see, use the square **black** OTS logo. Use of the **white** OTS logo should be used on a limited basis for optimal visibility on graphics or educational materials. Refer to the [OTS Logo Style Guide](#) for additional guidance.



Standard color OTS logo



Black OTS logo on color background



White OTS logo on color background

Consult with your OTS grant coordinator and the OTS PIO for specifics, format-appropriate logos, or if space does not permit the use of the OTS logo.

All OTS logos (vector and .png files) can be downloaded from the OTS website:

<https://www.ots.ca.gov/media-and-research/campaigns/new-logo/>

Significant OTS-Funded Events and Activities

Email the OTS PIO at pio@ots.ca.gov and copy your OTS grant coordinator at least **21** days in advance, or when first confirmed, a short description of any significant grant-related traffic safety event or program so the OTS has sufficient notice to arrange for attendance and/or participation. A "significant" grant-related traffic safety event or program is highly publicized in advance with anticipated media coverage.

If the OTS is unable to attend, email the OTS PIO and your OTS grant coordinator with brief highlights and/or results, including any media coverage (broadcast, digital, print) of the event within seven (7) business days following the grant-related event or program. Media and program highlights should be reflected in QPRs.

If you would like a representative from the OTS to speak at an event, participate on a panel or present during a webinar, please fill out the [OTS Speaker Request Form](#) and email it to the OTS PIO at pio@ots.ca.gov. Please allow up to five (5) business days for confirmation of whether a representative from the OTS can participate.

Kick-off Release

1. The kick-off news release that announces the OTS grant award must be distributed to the public by December 31, but no earlier than October 1 (the start of the grant year). The kick-off release should not be distributed until the grant is signed and executed.
2. The kick-off release must be sent to the OTS PIO at pio@ots.ca.gov for approval before distribution.
3. Once approved by the OTS PIO, copy the OTS PIO and your OTS grant coordinator when the approved release is distributed to the media and public.
4. OTS-supplied kick-off release templates are not exempt from the pre-approval policy and require prior approval before distribution.
5. All kick-off releases, whether using an OTS-supplied release template or written by the grantee, require approval from the OTS PIO.
6. If a grantee has more than one grant, they can combine the announcement of grant awards into a single release. The release should state the total amount of award funds, as well as the award amounts for each grant.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

News Releases

- 1. Where can I download the OTS news release templates?** All news release templates for traffic safety campaigns, grant awards, and enforcement activities are available for download on the OTS website:
<https://www.ots.ca.gov/grants/program-information/grantee-press-release-templates/>
- 2. I am using an OTS-supplied release template. Do I still need to send it to the OTS PIO for approval?** No. But copy the OTS PIO at pio@ots.ca.gov and your OTS grant coordinator when you distribute to the media and public.
- 3. Does the kick-off release need prior approval before being distributed?** Yes. All kick-off releases, whether using an OTS-supplied news release template or writing your own, require prior approval from the OTS PIO.
- 4. When do I distribute the kick-off news release?** The kick-off release should be distributed to the public by December 31, but no earlier than October 1. The kick-off release should not be distributed until the grant is signed and executed. Send the release to the OTS PIO for approval and copy your OTS grant coordinator.
- 5. We have multiple grants. Do I need to send out separate kick-off releases?** No. The grants can be combined into one announcement. The news release should state the total amount awarded for all grants, as well as the amounts allocated for each grant program.
- 6. What about warrant or probation sweeps and court stings? Do we need to send a news release for approval on sensitive operations?** No. Time-sensitive operations or activities that are embargoed or could impact operations by publicizing in advance are exempt from the OTS PIO approval process. However, announcements and results of activities should still be sent to the OTS PIO at pio@ots.ca.gov and your OTS grant coordinator. If the activity is embargoed, add an embargo date and time to the release or put "INTERNAL ONLY: DO NOT RELEASE" message in the subject line of the email.

Media Materials

- 7. Where are the OTS-developed educational materials?** The OTS educational materials are available on the "Go Safely, California" website:
<https://gosafelyca.org/media-toolkits/>. The OTS Communications and Public Affairs team is also available to customize the materials to your specific needs. Contact the OTS PIO at pio@ots.ca.gov.
- 8. We developed materials that were approved by the OTS PIO in a previous grant year and want to use them for this grant year. Do we still need to send to the OTS PIO for approval?** Yes. Any news releases, work plans, scripts, storyboards, artwork, graphics, videos or any educational or informational materials that received OTS PIO approval in a previous grant year must be resubmitted for approval in the current grant year.

- 9. Are we allowed to approve materials by subgrantees?** No. All materials developed by subgrantees and using OTS funds must be sent to the OTS PIO for review and approval. The same approval process through your OTS grant coordinator applies for allowable cost and budget expenditures.
- 10. The PIO approved the design for printed materials or safety items. Does this mean we can proceed with the purchase?** No. The OTS PIO only approves the content and design of materials. Approval for allowable cost and budget expenditure must come from your OTS grant coordinator.
- 11. I sent materials for approval, but have not heard anything. What do I do?** Send the OTS PIO a follow-up email asking for the status of the review and copy your OTS grant coordinator. Our goal is to respond within two (2) business days, but we may miss a few emails that come through.
- 12. What is the OTS PIO looking for on materials?** Design and content. Is there a traffic safety message? Does it align with the grant objective? Is there an OTS logo and funding language?
- 13. I have an education presentation that will be used for a class. Does this require prior approval?** Yes. Presentation slides for education classes require prior approval. However, training classes for Law Enforcement (i.e. DRE, ARIDE), Child Passenger Safety Technician certification/recertification (CPST) or any specific subject matter courses that are for professional licensing/certification are exempt from the pre-approval process.

Social Media

- 14. Do social media posts require prior approval from the OTS?** No. Only graphics and posts that are part of a paid media campaign grant objective using OTS funds or developed using contractual services from a subgrantee require prior approval.
- 15. Do we need to put the OTS logo on social media graphics?** No. However, the OTS logo should be added to any post that is part of a paid media campaign or developed with contractual services from a subgrantee. See [Question 19](#) for specifics on logo use and refer to the [OTS Logo Style Guide](#) for additional guidance.
- 16. Do we need to tag the OTS in social media posts?** We highly encourage grantees to promote traffic safety campaigns and grant activities on social media throughout the grant year, tagging the OTS and/or Go Safely, California social media accounts in their posts. The OTS social handles are OTS_CA on [X](#) (Twitter) and [Instagram](#); CaliforniaOTS on [Facebook](#); GoSafelyCA on [X](#) (Twitter), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#).
- 17. We are using contractual services for a paid social media campaign. Do we need to send posts, graphics and videos to the OTS PIO for approval?** Yes. Any paid social media campaign where artwork, graphics, videos and scripts are developed and produced using a subgrantee or contractual services requires prior approval before distribution.

Logos, Branding and Style Guide

- 18. How do I get the OTS and “Go Safely, California” logos?** All logos are available for download on the OTS website: <https://www.ots.ca.gov/media-and-research/campaigns/new-logo/>.
- 19. Is the “Go Safely, California” logo required on educational materials?** No, but you are welcome to use it.
- 20. Is there a specific OTS logo I should use?** Yes, but always use the logo color and lockup that has the best contrast and visibility. We recommend using the square **color** logo as a default for white backgrounds and the square **black** OTS logo for color backgrounds. The square white OTS logo should be used if the color or black logos have poor contrast or are difficult to see. A good rule of thumb is a contrast ratio of at least 4.5:1. Refer to “Use of OTS Logo and Standard Funding Language” section on pages 3 and 4 of this document, the [OTS Logo Style Guide](#) or contact the OTS PIO at pio@ots.ca.gov if you have questions.
- 21. Does the OTS have a branding and logo style guide?** Yes. Our style guide is available on the OTS website: [OTS Logos Style Guide](#)
- 22. We are purchasing a DUI trailer. Where should we put the OTS logo?** The OTS logo should be in at least two places on either the side or front/back of the trailer, next to your agency logo. Contact the OTS PIO at pio@ots.ca.gov if you require additional guidance on the appropriate placement of the logo.
- 23. Are we allowed to use OTS campaign logos or materials?** Yes. Contact the OTS PIO at pio@ots.ca.gov and we will provide any campaign logos or materials for your use.

Standard Funding Language

- 24. What is the OTS funding language and when is it required?** The OTS funding language should read, space permitting, on all news releases, advisories and printed materials as follows: ***Funding for this program was provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. For Spanish materials: Financiamiento para este programa fue proporcionado por una subvención de la Oficina de Seguridad Vial de California, a través de la Administración de Seguridad Vial Nacional.***
- 25. Do I need to put the standard funding language on a bike light, reflective armband or other safety items?** No. The OTS logo and standard funding language are only required when space permits.

Promotional And Safety Items

- 26. Are we allowed to give away or promote the distribution of free safety items to the public?**

Items such as bike lights, reflective arm/leg bands, child car seats, bicycle helmets and other items whose sole purpose is to improve highway safety should not be incentivized as a giveaway, “freebie,” or promotional item. Suggested language for flyers, social media posts, banners or bulletins announcing events or trainings includes “Child safety seats at no cost following education classes,” “Safety equipment available at no cost following training on proper use,” or “Instruction on

helmet fitting with bicycle helmets available to youth in need." Contact the OTS PIO at pio@ots.ca.gov or your OTS grant coordinator for guidance on promotion of grant activities and events. Refer to the [NHTSA Memorandum Use of NHTSA Highway Safety Grant Funds for Certain Purchases](#) or contact your OTS grant coordinator for further guidance.

- 27. What if I am using materials or offering prizes/giveaways that are not an allowable cost but are being donated or paid for by a partner?** Any materials using the OTS logo or used for a grant-related activity or objective that is not an allowable cost should have a disclaimer on the materials. Suggested language includes "This item is provided courtesy of (Company or Organization name)," "Prizes provided courtesy of (Company or Organization name)," or "This item was paid for by (Company or Organization name)." Examples of items that are not allowable include: bumper stickers, keychains, goodie bags, electronics (Airpods, laptops, etc.), or any other "swag" or promotional item used as an incentive, giveaway or prize.

OTS Funded Events and Activities

- 28. How much notice is sufficient to request OTS attendance at a grant-funded event?** At least 21 days, or when the event is first announced. To request OTS attendance, fill out the [OTS Speaker Request Form](#) and email it to the OTS PIO at pio@ots.ca.gov.
- 29. What if we hold an event and the OTS is unable to attend?** Email the OTS PIO at pio@ots.ca.gov and copy your OTS grant coordinator with brief highlights, including any media coverage, within seven (7) days following the grant-related event or program.