**Safety Service Patrol Standardization and Recommended Practices**

**Pooled Fund Study Problem Statement**

July 12, 2021

# Background:

The objective of the Safety Service Patrol (SSP) Pooled Fund Study (PFS) is to support the development of recognized industry standards by establishing tools and technical reports that identify best practices and aligns those best practices to assist organizations in addressing issues that are common among agencies that manage and operate SSPs. The SSP PFS will provide an opportunity to facilitate information sharing and documentation of the successful practices of established SSP programs. The SSP Industry Association (SSPIA) will partner with the PFS to establish a repository of information for all existing and future agency members of the SSPIA.

Many jurisdictions throughout the country operate full-function SSPs that are equipped to provide a wide range of complex, on-scene assistance to help mitigate an incident. SSP Operators are often first on the scene of an incident and provide immediate and invaluable assistance to law enforcement, involved parties, and other first responders. In many programs, SSP Operators remain on the scene throughout its duration, which increases their exposure to traffic and threatens their personal safety. The collective experience gained from agencies managing these programs will provide invaluable knowledge to improve the safety of SSP Operators, first responders, and the public.

The PFS is intended to expand upon the FHWA-led 2017 study entitled, “Safety Service Patrol Priorities and Best Practices” (FHWA-HOP-16-047) that largely focused on which agencies currently have SSP programs, the programs’ overall objectives, items for new program managers to consider, and performance metrics used by those programs. The PFS is looking to further identify best practices that can support standards in the application of emergency traffic control; safety protocols for SSP vehicles and associated equipment; and guidelines for staffing, training, and certification of SSP staff. Agencies providing SSP services prioritize the safety of their operators, first responders, and the public. The results of this PFS will support those agencies with that top priority by providing guidance for SSP program management; documentation of standard for emergency traffic control and SSP support activities; and best practices in staffing and training initiatives employed by existing SSP programs.

# Objectives:

The primary objective of this PFS study will be to gain technical information related to SSP program management, standards associated with SSP response protocol and the implementation of traffic control, and references and guidance related to staffing, training, and resource allocations within SSP programs. The goals include:

1. Assemble best practices and lessons learned from existing programs
2. Develop guidance documents based on lessons learned from existing programs
3. Reference or create tools that will help agencies make informed program decisions such as route selection, staffing levels, and resource allocation

# **Scope of Work:**

The work plan is described in three primary phases. Phase 1 is best practices research effort on the deployment of emergency traffic control (ETC) and potential SSP vehicle configurations used by agencies across the country. Phase 2 is focused on the staffing resources with a research effort focused on Staffing strategies, training programs, and the use of associated certifications. Phase 3 includes a focus on the strategic level of managing an SSP program and will focus on funding strategies and budgets, and resource management (route selection, number and type of vehicles, lengths of patrol routes, time of day, etc.)

## Phase 1 Best Practices in ETC and Vehicle Configurations (est. $250,000)

Phase 1 includes an assessment in standards for both SSP vehicle and emergency traffic control implementation. SSP programs can range widely in the types of services provided to the motorists and it is paramount that responders can safely manage the on-scene response. This requires the appropriate type of vehicle, communications, technology and resources to be contained within a single vehicle. This phase will look at emergency traffic control layouts that optimize the safety of all responders and the public and balance with the available storage capacity of an SSP vehicle. This will include the color and visibility of the vehicles, traffic control devices and placement, lighting systems and other emerging technologies (beacons, tethered drones, etc.) that add value to the response and safety. In addition, it will look at additional technologies and equipment contained on an SSP vehicle and the effectiveness of those tools in supporting a response.

Tasks:

1. Multi-state Program and Literature Review
2. Focused research and outreach to agencies on ETC layouts, vehicle equipment, and use of emerging technologies
3. Technical guide for best practices in ETC implementation, including device requirements and schematics of actual layout
4. Technical guide for potential vehicle configurations (chassis, 4x4 etc.), equipment needs, and emerging technology applications

## Phase 2 Staffing, Training, and Certification ($275,000)

Phase 2 is focused on how agencies are staffing their SSP program. Programs can use in-house, contracted staff, or even a hybrid structure to provide the necessary staffing levels and oversight of the day-to-day operations. Additionally, SSP staff are required to perform independently every day and must have a broad technical skill set to respond to a variety of issues while on duty. This phase will include research on the structure and content of existing training programs as well as identifying lessons learned or the future direction of established programs. This research also should capture the integration of certification within agencies’ training curriculum and how that certification is used to support the staffing, hiring, and promotion structure.

Tasks:

1. Multi-state Program and Literature Review
2. Focused research and outreach to agencies on staffing structure including policies or legislation that may steer the decisions around the staffing structure
3. Focused research and outreach to agencies on training and certification programs and how they are integrated into the resource management and staffing strategy
4. Technical guide for best practices in staffing structures including job descriptions, qualifications job postings, policies, and legislation that drive staffing decisions
5. Technical guide for developing, implementing, and maintaining a training and certification program

## Phase 3 Program Management ($225,000)

Phase 3 is focused on an assessment of existing programs and their program management strategies. This includes a look at tools used for route selection, asset management, staffing levels, and budgeting purposes. All public agencies are required to commit to a budget and that is no exception for an SSP. This research will focus on how SSP programs are determining and managing budgets and how they are applying those budgets to resource management decisions. The research will look to identify tools and tactics that can be applied to route selection, staffing levels, and even asset management for vehicles and the necessary equipment for each vehicle. The research should also focus on lessons learned and identified growth areas from the agencies researched. The culmination of the research should provide tools and references that other agencies can apply to mature their own SSP programs to the next level based on performance and return on investment.

Tasks:

1. Multi-state Program and Literature Review
2. Focused research and outreach to agencies on program management tools and strategies
3. Technical guide for best practices in program management including example tools, lessons learned, and budgeting strategies that support the defined program objectives

# Commitments:

The desired commitment from each partner is $25,000 per year for approximately 5 years (FY21-25) or until research efforts are complete.

Commitment covers travel for an in-person meeting approximately once per year throughout the life of the project. Specific meetings and locations to be determined during the course of the project.

Will be pursuing a 100% SPR-B waiver.

Please reach out to the Lead Agency Contact at any time if you are interested in participating.