

Pipeline Safety Trust - 2011/12 Community Technical Assistance Grant - Synopsis

This grant will allow the Pipeline Safety Trust to bring together citizen and local government representatives from around the country who have shown leadership in pipeline safety issues in their respective communities to learn from and develop contacts with industry and regulatory experts, and then develop a strategy for ensuring better representation of the public in official proceedings pertaining to pipeline safety issues. This will mainly be accomplished by facilitating a meeting of these people from around the country, providing them with background material beforehand, and easy access to additional material and ongoing communication after the meeting and strategy has been developed.

Describe how the proposed project is focused on areas where a pipeline failure could pose a significant risk to people or to unusually sensitive environmental areas (see definition in 49 CFR 195.6).

Most all of the participants we have tentatively identified have become involved with pipeline safety issues in their local communities exactly because of their concern for protecting the people and environments in those communities. Most all of their concerns have been brought about because of pipeline incidents that negatively affected people or environmental areas in their communities or from their growing awareness to their own proximity to pipelines and the risk that poses to them. By better educating this targeted group about how pipelines are constructed, operated, maintained, and regulated, and then engaging them in a strategy of involvement, it is our hope they will help provide a stronger and credible “public” voice for protection of people and the environment.

Describe the specific concerns the proposed project will address, including the range of risks that affected pipelines pose to the affected geographic area and the risks the community poses to the pipelines.

PHMSA, state regulators and the pipeline industry themselves have all voiced a concern over the lack of credible public participation in a wide variety of pipeline safety proceedings. Through this grant we hope to help develop a growing number of citizens and local government representatives with the knowledge and commitment to take a more active roll in participating in a variety of aspects of pipeline safety. These activities most likely include:

- Participation and help with implementation of recommendations of the Pipeline and Informed Planning Alliance in their local communities to help create greater safety where new development is occurring near pipelines.
- Engagement and discussions with regulators and industry of how to better provide public awareness materials to the public and local officials so they can better recognize, report, respond to and prevent pipeline problems in their communities.
- Providing comments from a public or local government perspective on PHMSA and state agency pipeline safety rulemakings.
- Since these people are the eyes and ears in their communities help them to better understand and work with local pipeline companies on damage prevention programs in their local communities
- Work with Local Emergency Planning Committees to ensure that emergency responders in their communities have received adequate training regarding pipeline emergencies and have received and reviewed pipeline company’s emergency plans.

Describe how the proposed project will ensure open communication with affected pipeline operators and partnership with other key members of the community.

This project is all about increasing communications and partnerships. The "public," including local government, often are missing at various pipeline safety meetings and are not well represented in official proceedings pertaining to pipeline safety issues. This project is meant to alleviate that lack of participation to ensure better communication and partnerships with all the groups that are currently involved in pipeline safety. The invited participants for this project will be key members of their communities, and pipeline operators and state and federal regulators will be invited to be an integral part of the education of these people and the development of the strategy to ensure their further involvement in official proceedings pertaining to pipeline safety issues.

Open communications and partnerships will be stressed as a foundation of moving pipeline safety forward throughout this project, and it is our hope that upon completion this project will have significantly increased the possibilities for greater communication, partnership and involvement of the public with pipeline operators and state and federal regulators.

Describe how the proposed project is designed to improve performance and safety over time in areas such as engineering, damage prevention, land use, public education, emergency response, and/or community awareness.

For damage prevention, public education, land use, emergency response and public awareness pipeline safety programs to be successful they need to more fully include the key stakeholder group that impacts those areas - the public, including local government. Often these types of programs are designed and implemented by the pipeline industry or regulators with very limited or no involvement of the public. This project strives to create an educated and committed group of public representatives that can help fill this gap to ensure that the messages developed are really on target so the public pays attention, and that the barriers and incentives that apply to the public are really well understood and addressed. This project will help provide more involvement of the public which should dramatically improve many of these pipeline safety programs as the public perspective is better understood and integrated into these efforts.

It is also well documented that people in various stakeholder groups tend to listen to messages delivered by members of their own group more than messages delivered by "outsiders." It is our intention that through this project a larger group of people from the public and local government stakeholder group can become knowledgeable and active in these programs and serve as believable "insider champions" to help make damage prevention, public education, land use, emergency response and public awareness pipeline safety programs more pertinent to other members of the public. This should benefit the inclusion, acceptance, and implementation of many of these programs that rely on acceptance of the public to succeed.

Describe the specific goals, objectives, milestones, and estimates of project costs associated with the proposed project.

Goal: To provide a stronger, more educated and credible "public" voice for protection of people and the environment and a strategy for ensuring better representation of the public in official proceedings pertaining to pipeline safety issues.

Objective 1: Identify and enlist 30-50 citizens and local government representatives from across the country to be part of the project.

Tasks:

- Work with existing regulatory and pipeline industry contacts to identify potential candidates
- Develop clear description of expectations for potential participants
- Prioritize potential list of candidates based on factors such as expertise, geographical location, previous involvement, standing in community, etc
- Contact and enlist participants in priority order

Milestone: 30-50 participants enlisted. **Timeline:** 90 days after grant awarded.

Objective 2: Provide basic pipeline safety information to increase broad understanding of the issues and to ensure all participants have a basic level of understanding before they are brought together.

Tasks:

- Develop and administer an initial online survey of participants to gauge their basic understanding of pipeline safety issues
 - Based on survey findings develop 6-8 pipeline safety briefings on specific topics
 - In the 90 days leading up to the in-person meeting distribute the briefings at intervals that allow participants to digest the material and learn more via links provided for more information if so desired.
 - 2 weeks before in-person meeting administer a second online survey to gauge progress made in increasing understanding of issues

Milestones: Administer 2 surveys and distribute educational briefing. **Timeline:** 1st survey administered about 3 months after grant awarded; educational briefings distributed about every two weeks between 4th -6 months after grant awarded; Final survey administered at end of briefings distribution.

Objective 3: Hold a two day in-person meeting of participants, and industry and regulatory experts, to solidify understanding of issues, create a cohesive group, and develop a strategy for better representation of the public in official proceedings pertaining to pipeline safety issues.

Tasks:

- Find a suitable date and centrally located venue near a transportation hub to hold meeting
- Arrange for meeting and travel logistics for participants
- Arrange for meeting facilitation and presenters as necessary
- Hold meeting and develop participation strategy

Milestone: Hold meeting and develop strategy. **Timeline:** Meeting to be held in 7th or 8th month after grant awarded.

Objective 4: Provide ongoing educational materials and involvement opportunities to participants to implement participation strategy agreed upon to increase representation of the public in official proceedings pertaining to pipeline safety issues.

Tasks:

- Develop system for easy communication with and between participants.
- Provide ongoing educational materials and notices of potential involvement opportunities
- Provide federal and state regulators and industry representative notice of the availability of this group of public representatives interested in greater involvement.
- Enlist specific involvement of relevant participants when specific opportunities arise.

Milestone: System of education and involvement of participant implemented. **Timeline:** Within 1 week of meeting and ongoing through end of grant and beyond.

Describe the plan for evaluating and disseminating the results of the proposed project.

The plan will be evaluated by the following measurables:

- The ability to recruit, and the quality of the, the 30-50 participants
- The ability to recruit regulatory and industry advisors
- The increase in the understanding of pipeline safety issues by participants as measured by the before and after surveys
- The ongoing engagement of the participants to follow-up activities
- The number of participants that volunteer and can be placed or involved in official proceedings pertaining to pipeline safety issues.

The following results will be disseminated in the following ways.

- The Pipeline Safety Trust will develop a new public section of our website that pertains to this project. That website will include:
 - The names, contact information, short bio, and interest areas for each participant
 - A synopsis of the before and after surveys
 - All educational briefings provided to the participants
 - The final strategy that is developed to better involve the public in official proceedings pertaining to pipeline safety issues.
- Regulatory groups (NAPSR and PHMSA), pertinent industry associations (API, AOPL, AGA, INGAA, APGA), and standard and best practice setting groups that match participant expertise (API, ASME, PIPA, CGA, NFPA, NACE, etc) will be notified about the project and informed of the availability of all the information on the website, and asked to contact the Pipeline Safety Trust and/or participants when opportunities for public participation in events, fact finding, or official proceedings pertaining to pipeline safety issues occur.
- The Pipeline Safety Trust will also strive to discuss this project and its outcomes at state and national conferences and forums, and in our newsletter that goes to over 700 people nationally.
- Participants will also be encouraged to directly contact pipeline operators and regulatory bodies in their own communities and notify them of this project and their interest in becoming more involved in pipeline safety activities and proceedings.

Describe how the proposed project provides the potential for learning or technology transfer to other groups and communities.

As stated previously participants will be selected from diverse communities across the country and also for their interests in a variety of pipeline safety issues, such as damage prevention, planning near pipelines, public education and awareness, and emergency response. This will allow the education they receive and the efforts they undertake to be spread across a wide geographic area as well as across a range of different pipeline safety issues.

It is our intent that these initial participants become the local pipeline safety “champions” in their communities as well as participating in larger pipeline safety activities and proceedings. They will be provided with the background, support, and contacts to become successfully involved in their own communities as well as national efforts. By growing a larger credible public voice for pipeline safety across the country and across a variety of issues, we believe this will help to encourage others to take more notice of pipeline safety issues and become involved as well. It is one of our core beliefs that more public awareness can be turned into more public involvement, which in turn helps assure greater pipeline safety, which helps ensure better protection of people and sensitive environments.