

DID YOU SAY GRANT MONEY? – Trent Lozano LEL

There are a few times every year I consistently hear officers looking for extra income. It is almost always around the holidays or when they want to take vacations, i.e.: Spring Break, summer, etc.

Being cops, we usually don't get to vacation at the same time as everyone else (if at all), so I always ask, "Do you work the STEP grants?" ***Insert blank stare here***, "Is there a STEP grant available around the holidays?" is the usual reply.

The answer is YES! And the time to sign up is NOW. By the time you read this your agency will have very little time left to sign up for the FY2024 Impaired Driving Mobilization or IDM grant.

While this is a great way for officers to earn a little extra for those Christmas gifts or vacation funds, that isn't the reason why the grant is offered. The state of Texas has consistently led the nation in alcohol related fatalities for years. While I normally assume Texas is the best at everything, this is an area we need to gladly give up the crown. We average 12 deaths a day on Texas roadways and that has got to stop. Every year Texas loses the population of a small town (over 4000 lives lost annually) to traffic fatalities and we can do more to lower that number. Participating in an IDM grant is a great way for agencies to take a public stand against the dangers of drinking and driving and show your citizens that you support traffic safety initiatives to help save lives.

IDM has four two-week enforcement periods over the fiscal year, and they all coincide with major holidays. The first is Christmas/New Years, then Spring Break, then Independence Day and finally Labor Day.

The way IDM works is the same as other STEP grants. It is a reimbursement grant for overtime traffic enforcement shifts (paid at the OT rate) worked between 6pm and 6am during the designated dates. Officers are encouraged to specifically be on the lookout for impaired drivers but may make traffic stops for any traffic violation they observe. The goal is high visibility enforcement so stay mobile in your zone and be seen. After the enforcement period ends the grant administrators will fill out the proper documentation and submit to TxDOT for reimbursement.

(Obviously there are going to be other details, but your Law Enforcement Liaison will be able to assist you throughout the entire process.)

The deadline to request funding is Friday, August 4th. Please contact your Law Enforcement Liaison to get in on this opportunity. Your communities don't want you to have to wait another year...

You can reach out to your LEL here: [instructors \(buckleuptexas.com\)](mailto:instructors@buckleuptexas.com) or contact lynda.walker@txlel.org

