



## FUNDING IMPAIRED DRIVING INITIATIVES



The knowledge source for safe driving

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## Background and purpose

Adequate funding is needed to ensure that impaired driving legislation ultimately accomplishes its intended goals. Resources are essential to enable practitioners to implement programs and policies, maximize their effectiveness and achieve declines in drunk driving fatalities and injuries.

This brochure from the Working Group on DWI System Improvements illustrates how the level of available funding for the drunk driving problem in past decades has directly affected the problem and, in part, limited progress in reducing fatalities and injuries. It describes the importance not only of sufficient funding but the proper allocation of such funds to ensure that impaired driving initiatives are properly implemented and that they deliver the promised results. In addition, it contains recommendations to help agencies locate sources of funding and protect current funding, increase their bargaining power, and identify and facilitate access to previously untapped resources.

The Working Group on DWI System Improvements is a coalition of influential organizations representing front-line professionals in all segments of the criminal DWI system. This coalition was formed in 2003 to advance the recommendations stemming from a comprehensive review of the DWI system (available at [www.tirf.org](http://www.tirf.org)). During its six year tenure, this consortium has shaped the focus on and development of drunk driving initiatives with its unique perspective on the translation of legislation, policies and programs into operational practices. The Working Group is a recognized source of institutional knowledge and expertise that has become a resource to practitioners, agency administrators and policymakers.

## How much does the drunk driving problem cost society?

The staggering economic cost of this problem is an overwhelming burden borne by all jurisdictions. A single fatality is estimated to cost taxpayers \$3.5 million, and the cost of alcohol-related crashes exceeds \$50 billion annually (Impaired Driving Subcommittee 2006). More importantly, the social costs of this problem cannot be ignored. Every day thousands of people across the country are coping with the preventable death or disability of family members and friends.

## What funding is available to address the drunk driving problem?

The vast majority of funding to support impaired driving initiatives is available from the U.S. Federal Department of Transportation through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The funding is allocated to three main grant programs: Section 403, Section 402 and Section 410 as part of the Federal Highway Bill.

The Section 403 grant program was established in 1966 and authorizes the use of federal funds to “engage in all phases of highway safety traffic conditions”. It also authorizes cooperative agreements for the purpose of “encouraging innovative solutions to highway safety problems”. The amount of funding available through this program has been relatively stable over time. For example, the Federal Highway Bill (TEA-21) authorized \$72 million for each of six years for the Section 403 research and development program. However, available funding specifically allocated towards impaired driving was low, given that only \$7 million was earmarked for driver and behavioral research (including impaired driving) in FY 2002. Hence the amount of available funding is not sufficient to address the many research needs, leaving them completely or partially unmet.

In 1966, Congress also established the Section 402 State and Community Highway Safety Grant Program which charged the U.S. States and Territories with the implementation of highway safety programs across a number of road safety issues, including drunk driving. Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, available funding ranged from \$140-150 million annually. However, funding allocated for this program increased dramatically in 2005-2009 under SAFETEA-LU from \$164 million to \$235 million. Finally, the Section 410 Alcohol-Impaired Driving Countermeasure Incentive Grant Program was authorized by the Omnibus Drug Initiative in 1989 and became part of the Federal Highway Bill. Funding for the Section 410 program increased dramatically from less than \$50 million between 1998-2005 up to \$120 million in 2006 and \$139 million in 2009.

Of course a range of other agencies representing transportation, criminal justice, health, non-governmental, private organizations and the alcohol industry have also contributed funding of various amounts and at various

times to address the drunk driving problem over the past three decades (e.g., Section 154 and 164 of the Highway Bill). These funds have been important to enable progress and should be strongly encouraged in the future. However, these additional sources were not always directly available to government agencies responsible for implementation and do not account for the majority of available monies. At the same time these additional funds have been inconsistently available, particularly during periods of economic challenge.

## **How has funding for drunk driving initiatives influenced progress over time?**

In the early 1980s, impaired driving became recognized as a major social problem due to the more than 20,000 fatalities that occurred annually. This led to an overwhelming demand for action to address the problem. As a consequence, grant programs began to address this issue and agencies invested heavily in several high-profile initiatives focused on raising political and public awareness and the passage of criminal drunk driving legislation. The funding enabled governments to achieve vital progress in reducing drunk driving in the 1980s and early 1990s, in part, because these initiatives focused on the “low hanging fruit” and those individuals whose behavior was easier to change. During this period, dramatic declines in the number of fatalities to less than 15,000 occurred as a result of unprecedented legal and educational efforts that created a deterrent effect and stimulated meaningful change in public attitudes and behavior.

From the mid-1990s to mid-2000s, there was an increase in focus on the highest risk impaired driving offenders who often have a history of drunk driving convictions and alcohol problems, and who frequently drive at high blood alcohol concentrations (BACs). These offenders are responsible for a disproportionate share of drunk driving deaths.

The focus on this target population demanded more research and enhanced strategies because this group was resistant to change and often required intensive monitoring and supervision. This sparked a flood of impaired driving legislation across jurisdictions designed to increase penalties and implement graduated sanctions involving a host of proven policies and programs. Accordingly, it is fair to say that during this time, resources continued to be devoted to dealing with the problem of impaired driving and there were some increases in funding. However, funding is still not commensurate with the gravity of the problem. As evidence of this, since 1980 the amount of money apportioned by Congress to highway safety (for impaired driving and other issues) has decreased both in real dollars and dollars adjusted for inflation. Although approximately 80-85% of motor vehicle fatalities are due to driver and road user behavior, less than 2% of federal-aid highway funding is dedicated to programs aimed at improving behavior among this population. According to the Governors

Highway Safety Association (GHSA), the organization representing highway program managers in each State, “Federal driver behavior highway safety grant programs have been consistently under-funded”.

The implications are profound. Program development has not been habitually coupled with essential resources needed for such things as staffing, training, and the use of new technologies. In particular, many of the interventions targeted towards persistent offenders were delivered through the criminal justice system, however funding was not consistently provided to these agencies resulting in “unfunded mandates”. Not surprisingly, declines in drunk driving fatalities and injuries reached a plateau, with the number of fatalities hovering between 13,000 and 14,000 for almost a decade. Indeed, alcohol-related motor vehicle fatalities have declined only 5% over the last decade, including a marginal .02% in 2005.

The good news is that since 2006, as more funding has been made available to address drunk driving through SAFETEA-LU, progress has been reinstated. In 2007, there was a 4% decline in drunk driving fatalities and an additional 10% decline in 2008.

Although speculative, the implication is that the level of funding for programs and policies to address the problem of drunk driving may be related to the level and effectiveness of countermeasure activity, which in turn is strongly related to the magnitude of the problem. However, given the number of proven interventions that have been implemented, increased education and enforcement, and recent economic conditions, it is difficult to attribute declines to any single factor.

## **Why has funding for drunk driving not been commensurate with the problem?**

Available funding for impaired driving initiatives has not been commensurate with the magnitude of the problem, as described above, for three important reasons. First, earlier significant declines in deaths and injuries that were more easily achieved, in combination with the passage of a wealth of legislation targeted towards high risk offenders created the unfortunate misperception with politicians and the public that the “problem has been solved” and attention was diverted to other issues. For this reason, available funding has stagnated over time despite the fact that further progress in dealing with drunk driving crashes has not been sustained, and in some instances has even been eroded.

Second, grant programs underwent a number of important changes around the turn of the millennium. While TEA-21 brought consistency to funding by creating budget firewalls around highway safety programs to protect available funding, these programs were often funded at levels

below what was authorized. Of greater concern, the diversity of grant programs that proliferated was associated with distinct eligibility criteria, separate applications and individual deadlines. The net result was that State highway safety offices spent a significant amount of time trying to manage grant programs such that the federal approach to highway safety became duplicative and very fragmented. Many of these challenges have since been addressed with SAFETEA-LU .

Third, new road safety and criminal justice issues have emerged that have captured the attention of researchers, policymakers and the public. In the transportation field, driver fatigue, driver distraction, and drugged driving have gained prominence with policymakers and the public, and resulted in the depletion of available resources to support impaired driving research and the development of programs and policies. While these issues warrant attention and require funding, it must not be forgotten that drunk driving continues to be one of the most significant causes of deaths and injuries on the nation's highways, and, as such, demands significant attention.

Similarly, in the criminal justice arena, high profile issues including gangs, guns, sex offenders and homeland security became the focus of significant resources to support research and program development. As evidence of this, in the enforcement arena, traffic units are shrinking and there have been increasing assignments to secure critical facilities (e.g., nuclear power and electric plants, gasoline depositories, military targets), some of which, in some cases, are unfunded mandates that affect staffing for patrols.

Again, while these topics are and should be a source of political and public concern, it should not be overlooked that impaired driving continues to be one of the leading criminal causes of death as it kills more than 11,000 people and causes more than 275,000 injuries annually, in addition to the countless people who are affected by these crashes.

Finally, and most recently, an economic downturn in the U.S. has amplified funding challenges and resulted in reductions in available monies across all sectors, including support for essential programs. As a result, states are dealing with enormous deficits that have rapidly depleted available resources, making it more challenging for them to maintain basic services much less to pursue and deliver needed improvements to reduce impaired driving.

## **How are jurisdictions currently addressing the problem?**

The good news is that jurisdictions have leveraged the newly available resources from SAFETEA-LU to renew efforts. They are developing a comprehensive package of evidence-based tools to address the problem and strengthen program implementation with commensurate funding to support staffing, technologies and education. This has likely contributed to new declines in drunk driving fatalities following years of nominal progress,

in conjunction with a host of other factors and achievements. As evidence of this, in 2007 there was a 4% reduction in impaired driving fatalities as the number of deaths declined from 13,491 in 2006 to 12,998 in 2007. This was followed by an additional 10% reduction in 2008 to 11,773 deaths. These data suggest that sustained efforts to support program implementation can contribute to this downward trend.

## How can recent progress be sustained?

Recent progress can be sustained by enabling jurisdictions to continue to develop strategies to increase understanding of the problem through research, to monitor the problem and measure progress, and to implement, evaluate, enhance and expand proven programs and policies. Consistent financial support of these strategies is essential to achieving continued reductions in impaired driving fatalities, meaning that the currently available funding must not be depleted.

Jurisdictions must not become complacent about the issue in light of recent progress. More work is needed to strengthen the ability of governments to consistently identify and track impaired drivers, to improve program implementation, to expand technological innovations, and to increase much needed educational initiatives that provide practitioners with the knowledge, skills and tools to manage offenders. Continued vigilance can ensure that offenders are consistently subject to these laws and programs and recent declines in the problem continue to be achieved.

## Why is it important to stay focused on drunk driving?

Impaired drivers still account for a substantial portion of the workload in criminal justice, health, and transportation agencies as drunk driving remains one of the leading criminal causes of death. To illustrate:

- > more intensive and sustained supervision of high risk offenders is needed to protect the public and change behavior;
- > some 17% of the 4.2 million offenders on probation are drunk drivers;
- > an estimated 25%-75% of convicted drunk drivers continue to drive after their license is suspended or revoked;
- > just 10% of drunk drivers have an ignition interlock installed on their vehicle;
- > drunk drivers and their innocent victims predominate emergency rooms; and,
- > there are not enough DWI courts or substance abuse treatment programs to manage all of the drunk drivers in need of services.

Of greater concern, some offenders are still able to avoid sanctioning altogether. For this reason, the attention and resources that are allocated to this issue must not be decreased in lieu of other emerging concerns.

## What funding is currently available for drunk driving initiatives?

There are many funding opportunities for drunk driving initiatives and practitioners need to know where to look. Potential funding sources that can be pursued include:

**Federal Grant Opportunities:** <http://grants.gov>

**Foreign Aid:** <http://www.usaid.gov/>

### Transportation:

- > National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA): [www.nhtsa.dot.gov/](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/)
- > Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA): <http://www.ghsa.org/>

### Tribal Funding:

- > Indian Health Services: <http://www.ihs.gov/>
- > Bureau of Indian Affairs: <http://www.bia.gov/>

**U.S. Department of Education (ED):** <http://www.ed.gov/grantapps/>

### U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS):

- > Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT): <http://csat.samhsa.gov/>
- > Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDCP): <http://www.cdc.gov/od/pgo/funding/grantmain.htm>
- > National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) <http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/extramural/rfas.htm>
- > National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA): <http://www.nida.nih.gov/>
- > Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT): <http://sbirt.samhsa.gov/index.htm>
- > Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA): <http://www.samhsa.gov/grants/>

### U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS):

<http://www.dhs.gov/xopnbiz/grants/>

## **U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ):**

- > Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA): <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/funding/index.html>
- > Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS): <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/funding.htm>
- > National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS): <http://www.ncjrs.org/fedgrant.html>
- > National Institute of Corrections (NIC): <http://www.nicic.org/>
- > National Institute of Justice (NIJ): <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/funding/welcome.htm>
- > Office for Victims of Crime (OVC): <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/fund/dakit.htm>
- > Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS): <http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/Default.asp?Item=46>
- > Office of the Comptroller, OJP Financial Guide: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/>
- > Office of Justice Programs (OJP): <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/funding.htm>
- > Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP): <http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org/funding/>
- > Office on Violence Against Women (OVW): <http://www.ovw.usdoj.gov/>

## **State Funding Opportunities:**

- > State Office of Highway Safety
- > Administrative Office of Courts
- > State Department of Corrections
- > State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Agencies
- > State Department of Transportation

## How can we get the most out of current funding?

**Provide practitioners with flexibility in achieving goals.** The U.S. Federal Highway Bill is the main source of funding for impaired driving initiatives. While the Highway Bill encompasses a broad range of critical transportation issues, the safety component of this bill targets important road user issues including impaired driving.

The impaired driving grants in this legislation that are most relevant to practitioners in 2010 include:

- > Section 402 – Highway Safety Programs;
- > Section 403 – Highway Safety Research and Development Grants;
- > Section 408 – State Traffic Safety Information System Improvements;
- > Section 410 – Alcohol Impaired Driving Incentive Grant Program; and
- > Section 410 – High Fatality Rate Grants.

To achieve continued progress in reducing impaired driving, the next re-authorization of this legislation should support a comprehensive, balanced package of impaired driving initiatives as opposed to a “one size fits all approach”. This means a combination of education and prevention, enforcement and sanctioning activities designed to target key risk factors and distinguish between different types of offenders. Programs and policies that have been proven effective by research should receive the highest priority. For an overview of these initiatives please visit the NHTSA website at [www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov); Countermeasures That Work (2008).

Of equal importance, jurisdictions should retain some flexibility to meet requirements of the bill. Jurisdictions vary substantially and resources and legislation must account for these variations to ensure that there is buy-in and follow through on initiatives and strategies.

**Streamline the grants process.** Many agencies do not have professional grant writers on staff and have limited experience in grant writing. At the same time, in response to a growing number of submissions, granting organizations are requesting more and detailed information in specific formats with very short timelines for submission. While it is important that an objective and competitive process is applied to allocate grants to organizations, the requirements should not be so onerous as to discourage deserving agencies from submitting an application. Agencies that provide funding using a grant process should review their process to ensure that it is manageable for organizations that may be eligible to apply for grants.

At the same time, agencies that require assistance with grant writing should be encouraged to seek out local university researchers who are most often experienced with this process. At a minimum, researchers should be able

to provide some insight into successful grant writing, essential criteria, and ways to clearly articulate the importance of the proposed work.

**Acknowledge impaired driving as a mandate of other Federal agencies.** The Federal Highway Bill is not the only source of funding for impaired driving. In fact, there are several other Federal bills that will come up for re-authorization that could be leveraged to sustain impaired driving as a priority concern. At present, many Federal agencies that are significantly affected by the consequences of impaired driving do not explicitly identify this issue as part of their respective mandates. So, while these agencies can and do provide some funding for this issue, it can be challenging for practitioners to access because impaired driving is not specifically acknowledged in their legislation.

Some of the Federal agencies that can potentially include impaired driving as a recognized part of the mandate during the next re-authorization of their legislation include:

- > Department of Justice;
- > Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA);
- > Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP);
- > Department of Homeland Security;
- > Bureau of Indian Affairs;
- > Veterans Affairs; and,
- > Department of Foreign Affairs.

The re-authorization of each of these pieces of legislation represents a potential opportunity that could be leveraged to raise awareness of the outcomes drunk driving has and to facilitate access to resources that are already available or that can be allocated to this issue.

The ability of practitioners to demonstrate the effect of impaired driving on these agencies can provide policymakers with the tools to promote and garner support for such changes when it comes time to discuss re-authorization and appropriations.

**Recognize impaired driving as a priority at the local level.** Agencies at a local level must also be encouraged to recognize impaired driving as a priority within their mandate. Independent of State-level activities, local agencies affected by this issue can include a stated objective to reduce impaired driving. A stated agency objective is useful to communicate to the public the effect of impaired driving on communities and stimulate visibility and support in addressing the problem.

**Use consistent messages to communicate the problem.** The general public can be an effective tool to leverage funding for impaired driving initiatives. Unfortunately, the public's understanding of the problem is inconsistent. For this reason, it is important that agencies within each community use coordinated, easily understood and consistent messages to clearly articulate what has been accomplished and what is needed to achieve further declines in impaired driving.

Illustrating the pressure and cost of impaired driving in local communities can build a compelling case to justify investment in this problem. These facts are useful to make the problem a tangible one for individuals and communities. The ability to convey the costs of impaired driving on community services such as employment, child services, hospitals and healthcare, police agencies and local jails (and the subsequent staffing and budget implications) can motivate community leaders and organizations to contact local politicians and legislators to demand solutions.

**Develop new Federal legislation?** There has been debate for a number of years regarding whether impaired driving should become the focus of a new and separate Federal legislative bill to preserve the ability of agencies to make this issue a priority, particularly as budgets shrink. Unfortunately, impaired driving is not deemed a significant priority in the highway bill as it frequently is lost amidst other demanding transportation issues, such as infrastructure. Similarly, within the criminal justice field impaired driving often slips down the list of concerns in lieu of gang violence, sex offenders and drug trafficking.

The reality is that impaired driving as an issue is often competing with higher-profile issues that play on public fear in both the transportation and justice worlds. This may result in it slipping through the cracks and failing to receive attention that is commensurate with its magnitude or effect on communities.

While the creation of a new piece of legislation to specifically address the impaired driving issue is fraught with challenges and must be carefully considered, the fact that it has been proposed certainly illustrates the plight of practitioners in this field as being caught between the proverbial "rock and a hard place". Despite the significant effect this issue has on both transportation and criminal justice agencies, and the immense workload this problem creates for many agencies, it is not deemed a priority in either realm. This is a major impediment to achieving the desired reductions in the problem that are expected by the public.

## How can we improve the existing allocation of funds?

Prior to making funding decisions, agencies may want to consider the following questions:

- > Which impaired driving initiatives are currently in place?
- > What level of funding is each of these receiving?
- > Are these programs targeting the characteristics of the problem in their jurisdiction?
- > Is there any evidence that these programs are producing meaningful reductions in the magnitude of the problem – are they cost-effective?
- > If evaluation results are not available, are programs that are currently in place evidence-based?
- > Do current programs provide a comprehensive and strategic approach to dealing with the problem?
- > Are there redundancies and duplication of effort in existing programs that can be eliminated?

## How can I ensure funding for drunk driving initiatives is not eroded?

Keeping the focus on drunk driving can ensure that commensurate funding to address the problem continues to be available through the re-allocation of existing resources, the identification of new funding streams, or the use of strategic partnerships.

**Be a voice for the issue.** Leadership at all levels is critical. Politicians, policymakers, and agency administrators all play a critical role in retaining a priority focus on the drunk driving problem. Leaders must be able to speak in concrete terms about this issue and the pressure it has on their agency, environment or field relative to other issues in terms of staffing, workload, resources, and clients. The effects of the issue must be made tangible and visible to the media, to the public and to communities (e.g., the drain on health services). The issue must be consistently raised in conjunction with discussions about criminal justice, public safety, transportation and health care to ensure that the funding allocated to this problem is not eroded.

**Acknowledge impaired driving as a priority in legislation and policy.** Legislators and policymakers play an important role in ensuring that relevant legislation and policy pertaining to criminal justice, transportation, health care and public safety includes language that specifically acknowledges the influence and importance of impaired driving. It is essential that all government agencies with a vested interest in impaired driving explicitly acknowledge and voice support for this as a priority in their

respective mandates in order to make resources and funding available and accessible to provide practitioners with the tools to execute policies and programs.

**Gather hard data to demonstrate the effect of the problem on agencies.** Government officials and agency administrators can support continued funding by using hard data to clearly articulate the effect the problem is having on their agencies and local communities in terms of the volume of caseload/workload, staffing, drain on services, and costs. These hard facts make the problem tangible for politicians and the public and justify continued attention and resources for the issue at state and local levels.

**Coordinate activities across agencies.** Agencies with a vested interest in eliminating impaired driving can maximize the use of resources and justify continued funding by coordinating their activities. This will enable them to avoid duplication and demonstrate the benefits that can be achieved by partnerships that streamline activities as opposed to agencies working alone. This requires a strong network of senior officials to expressly support and encourage dialogue and information-sharing between line staff and across agencies that are partners in this fight.

**Develop co-funded arrangements and partnerships.** This practice alleviates the burden that would be placed on a single agency. There are many benefits of utilizing a collaborative approach. Such practices create important benefits for sponsors and enable initiatives to be sustained for longer periods of time, strengthen the quality of services that are delivered, and reduce competition for funding among agencies.

## Where can I find other potential funding sources?

The economic challenges in the U.S. mean that resources to tackle issues such as impaired driving are becoming increasingly scarce. At the same time, workloads are increasing as agencies struggle to do more with less. Creative thinking is needed to help unlock access to other funding sources.

There are other funding opportunities that exist at the federal, state, and local level outside of transportation, criminal justice and health sectors. The possibilities are endless for those practitioners who are willing to look and think outside of the confines of traditional sources in their own sector. As a first step, practitioners must consider what other agencies or departments might have a vested interest in addressing impaired driving. The key to securing funding/resources is finding converging common interests across these sectors and making a compelling case as to why it is necessary or beneficial for these 'outside' agencies to target impaired driving. If practitioners can illustrate the benefits that reductions in impaired driving would have for these outside agencies they are more likely to gain their support.

Other sources of revenue that can be considered include:

- > Charitable trusts
- > The Foundation Center:  
<http://fdncenter.org/grantmaker/foldermenu.html>
- > Insurance industry
- > Local correctional fees
- > Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP):  
<http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/>
- > Open Society Institute's Criminal Justice Initiative:  
<http://www.soros.org/grants>
- > U.S. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA):  
<http://www.cfda.gov>
- > Private organizations
- > Local charities
- > Foundations
- > Lottery corporations

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The mission of the Traffic Injury Research Foundation (TIRF) is to reduce traffic-related deaths and injuries. TIRF is a national, independent, charitable road safety institute. Since its inception in 1964, TIRF has become internationally recognized for its accomplishments in a wide range of subject areas related to identifying the causes of road crashes and developing programs and policies to address them affectively.

**Visit [www.tirf.org](http://www.tirf.org) to access:**

- > Electronic versions of all reports
- > Working Group activities/proceedings
- > State-specific information
- > Electronic inventory of state initiatives





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