

# Alcohol-Impaired Driving

## Countermeasures – TIRF Technical Assistance

### Background

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has a cooperative agreement with the Traffic Injury Research Foundation (TIRF; [www.tirf.ca](http://www.tirf.ca)) to provide technical assistance to requesting states in order to enhance the implementation and delivery of impaired driving countermeasures.

From 2009 to 2017, TIRF delivered technical assistance and training for alcohol ignition interlock programs in more than 30 states. In 2017, the cooperative agreement was expanded to encompass technical assistance related to a continuum of impaired driving countermeasures such as public education, high-visibility enforcement, or post-conviction programs.

Technical assistance is guided by the DWI Dashboard, a tool designed by TIRF with input from states. The Dashboard is used to identify system strengths, areas where improvements are needed and ways they can be achieved. The process adopted to deliver assistance in each jurisdiction is based on their priorities and capacity with much of the work being undertaken by TIRF staff. The opportunity to receive technical assistance is available to all states and regions upon request.

### Purpose and goals

The purpose of this initiative is to provide states with technical assistance and support to enhance the implementation and delivery of countermeasures to reduce impaired driving. The scope of work is determined in consultation with each state to ensure that the initiative is tailored to address state priorities and that it is both manageable and feasible. TIRF developed the DWI Dashboard to provide states with an electronic monitoring software tool to track their progress, identify gaps in their broader impaired driving system, and more efficiently utilize resources. The Dashboard examines 10 priority issues and acknowledges contextual factors within the state. It uses a two-tiered approach to first identify priority issues and then focus more attention on these areas to determine where and why gaps exist. Supporting resources are available, notably two strategic guides with templates, tools and examples of practice to guide the selection of improvements. Results from the Dashboard are used to inform the development of a strategic plan to address gaps. Technical assistance is also provided to support the implementation of the plan.

The process used to deliver assistance enables state agencies to share experiences and perspectives, discuss challenges, and work cooperatively to identify practical, achievable strategies and operational processes to strengthen DWI countermeasures. The goals are to help states:

- > Identify strengths and gaps in their DWI system and track progress;
- > Develop solutions that are evidence-based, practical and tailored to the state's context;
- > Develop an operational plan to achievement improvements;
- > Clarify roles/responsibilities of agencies to strengthen the delivery of countermeasures; and,

- > Streamline and strengthen procedures and practices as well as manage, and more efficiently allocate and use state resources.

## Outcomes

The technical assistance provides states with short-term and long-term strategies to strengthen their impaired driving system and achieve progress in reducing impaired driving deaths and injuries. It also provides states with practices to help them monitor and track progress over time and to use these data to inform decision-making. Strategies are context-sensitive and can be easily implemented to immediately address gaps and further capitalize on strengths. Finally, the technical assistance supports the development of tailored solutions for more complex challenges to achieve major improvements to countermeasures in the long-term. During the technical assistance, state agencies will have the opportunity to strengthen partnerships and collaborations with other agencies involved in program delivery through networking, roundtable discussions, and Q&A.

## Activities

**Phase I.** During the first phase, TIRF uses the DWI Dashboard to increase collective understanding of the state's DWI system. Data are collected from all facets of the system with input from select individuals representing several state agencies. The DWI system's dynamics, synergies, linkages and practices as they relate to overall progress in reducing alcohol-impaired driving are examined along with operational factors that influence progress. The DWI Dashboard acknowledges and accounts for unique contextual and environmental factors (i.e., the day-to-day challenges or barriers practitioners must overcome) which influence a state's progress. As such, it provides a holistic picture of the impaired driving issue by relying on the most important indicators that place progress in context and suggest opportunities for continuous improvement.

**Phase II.** During the second phase, TIRF works with representatives of state agencies to refine Dashboard results, explore complex issues, clarify priorities and identify solutions through conference calls and the review of program documents. These data are synthesized to summarize outcomes and explore consensus-based opportunities to pursue improvements that can be included in a strategic plan.

**Phase III.** During the third phase, TIRF distills the information that is collected throughout phases I and II in preparation of an onsite meeting. Results and strategy options are presented at the meeting for discussion to facilitate the creation of a consensus-based plan. Input is gathered from all representatives to finalize the plan, and to prepare for implementation. TIRF continues to be available for follow-up and support as needed. Tools, templates and resources will be provided by TIRF, along with access to key experts to assist states.

## Contact for more information

**Jennifer Davidson**

Highway Safety Specialist

NHTSA, Impaired Driving Division W44-212

1200 New Jersey Ave SE, Washington, DC 20590

Phone: 202-366-2163

[jennifer.davidson@dot.gov](mailto:jennifer.davidson@dot.gov)