

# **Governmental Affairs & Administration Committee**

## **RBS State Grants Administration & Program Performance Subcommittee**

### **Interim Report to Executive Committee**

#### State Members:

Pamela Dillon, OH, Subcommittee Chair  
Creig Grey, MI  
Felix Hensley, IN  
Charlie Sledd, VA

#### Associate Members:

Veronica Floyd, Brunswick corp.  
Larry Innis, MRAA

**Background:** The RBS State Grants Administration & Program Performance Subcommittee will work on behalf of the state with the Boating Safety Division to improve administration of the state RBS grants program and will provide assistance and guidance to state members to best meet grant requirements and to obtain the full share of their grant allocations.

**Methodology:** The Subcommittee met via conference call on three occasions to discuss its five charges. Mr. Vann Burgess, USCG Division of Boating Safety, provided significant support and guidance during subcommittee deliberations. Matthew Long, NASBLA Legislative Director, participated and provided support and guidance to the Subcommittee process.

#### Reference Materials:

- U. S. Department of Transportation, United States Coast Guard, State Recreational Boating Safety Programs, COMDTPUB P16755.3A, 2001.

Each of the five charges were reviewed and discussed at length. Due to the large turn-over of state BLAs, there was a significant learning curve which needed to be addressed.

The five charges are listed below with Subcommittee comments and recommendations:

1. Work with Coast Guard Boating Safety Division to develop meaningful measures of effectiveness for evaluating state RBS programs. Identify resources for Boating Law Administrators to provide instruction on the design and use of meaningful measures of effectiveness to gauge program performance. (NASBLA 2.4)

#### *Subcommittee Recommendations:*

- Subcommittee recommends that a BLA checklist be developed and posted on the NASBLA website to documents reference materials and recommended training for the RBS program. The State Recreational Boating Safety Programs notebook, a.k.a. RBS State Guide, is comprehensive and is the primary document for BLA reference.
  - Sub-committee recommends a PDF of the RBS State Guide be available in scanned, electronic format on the NASBLA website.
- Continue the USCG training session at the Spring BLA workshop with a focus on the Part II Performance Report definitions, data needs, and allowable program costs.
- To determine “measures of effectiveness to gauge program performance,” Subcommittee recommends the original Part II Performance Report committee be brought back together. (Original members: Ed Carter, Fred Messman, Alfonso Campos, Dolores Ferrell (now retired), and Jim Graybeal) to review the first two years of data available from the Part II Performance Report, determine discrepancies in interpretation of definitions, and needed recommend changes.
  - Sub-committee recommends training to ensure each state is interpreting and reporting the data consistently.

- To define “meaningful measures of effectiveness for evaluating state RBS programs,” the Subcommittee recommends that a national survey be distributed through NASBLA to capture current practices. Once survey results are available, analyze input and determine next steps.
2. Work with the Coast Guard Boating Safety Division to assist state boating programs in implementing and improving collection of data to support RBS grant requirements associated with program performance Part II. (NASBLA 2.4.2)

*Subcommittee Recommendations:*

- Sub-committee recommends the original RBS Part II Performance Report committee, or equivalent replacements, be reconvened to review the data, comment on the data results, and recommend performance measurement milestones (if possible) for LE/SAR programs.
  - Sub-committee recommends that, particularly in the upcoming program reauthorization year, NASBLA remind and strongly encourage that each state complete and file the Part II Performance Report by the December 2008 deadline as it impacts our ability to further revise and implement important program measurements and goals and report on program results to legislative bodies.
    - Subcommittee further recommends three full years of data be reviewed at the March 2009 Spring BLA workshop.
3. Examine Coast Guard state grant guidance documents and recommend that the USCG clarify areas of concern.

*Subcommittee Recommendations:*

- Subcommittee recommends that NASBLA remind each state to strictly comply with recommended program deadlines. USCG expressed that areas of concern as outlined in the RBS State Guide, including the various federal documents and guidelines, must be adhered to. The state coordinator is available to work on a state by state basis. Most important area of concern is that each state meets the program deadlines as these drive all other components of the program. Currently no penalty exists to states who do not meet deadlines.
  - Subcommittee supports USCG intent to create a planning and budgeting tool as an Excel spreadsheet to allow states to project the impact of varying program amounts and resulting federal funds to assist with planning and state budgeting.
  - Subcommittee recommends voluntary strategy sessions hosted by NASBLA in partnership with the USCG for states who do not match funds annually. Approximately nine states cannot meet their match. As a result, they have carry over to the next year or may lose funding.
4. Develop resources/ideas for small state programs to meet their grant match. (NASBLA 1.4)

*Subcommittee Recommendations:*

- While the NASBLA request to change the current match requirement from 50/50 to 25/75 will have some positive impact on this charge, it will not fully address the problem. It is reported that some states are not permitted to use specific expenditures (such as equipment) for their state match. That is an internal state policy and the USCG can do little or nothing to address this.
    - Subcommittee recommends that USCG continue to review allowable costs at the BLA workshop in order to assist states in claiming the full measure of reimbursement.
    - Sub-committee recommends that, if those states who do not meet their match are willing, NASBLA facilitate a meeting to discuss their common issues and provide legislative advocacy to address this at the state level.
5. Work with the Coast Guard Boating Safety Division to define program eligibility requirements/definitions i.e., approved marine casualty reporting system, adequate education program, sufficient patrol, adequate law enforcement and approved numbering system.

*Subcommittee Recommendations:*

- Subcommittee recommends a regular review of existing Federal Regulations addressing “numbering system” and “approved marine casualty reporting system” at NASBLA training sessions.
- Subcommittee recognizes that the legislative intent or definitions of “adequate education program,” “sufficient patrol,” and “adequate law enforcement” have been lost since the program was created. Subcommittee recommends NASBLA complete a review of the program data on how states are currently interpreting these items within individual state systems.
  - Subcommittee launched a short survey on June 20, 2008 to obtain baseline information. Twenty-seven states completed the survey as of June 25th. Subcommittee recommends these results be reviewed by the committee to identify possible best practices and provide guidance in determining further strategies. Survey results are attached as Appendix A.

Subcommittee recommends these five charges be continued.

Report by:  
Pamela Dillon, Sub-committee Chair

Attachment: Appendix A: RBS Program Measurements – Survey Results 6-08.pdf