

Nonprofit Organization Grants:
Coast Guard Office of Auxiliary and Boating Safety
Recreational Boating Safety

Federal Grant Title: National Non-Profit Organization Grant Program
Federal Agency: United States Coast Guard
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Grantee: National Association of Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA)
Grant Number: 3314FAN140213
Grant Title: Partnering with the U.S. Coast Guard & Recreational Boating Community to Implement the National Recreational Boating Safety Strategic Plan: NASBLA and the States

Award Amount: \$525,000.00

Synopsis:

This is the foremost grant that partners with and support the states, the Coast Guard and the recreational boating safety (RBS) community in implementation of the National Recreational Boating Safety Strategic Plan (2012-2016). NASBLA accomplishes this by:

Developing Policy Solutions and Products (Committee Work)

- Communicating Strategies to the States and Others (Small Craft Advisory, E-newsletter, Connected Community)
- Coordinating State Program Administration and Performance Measurement (BLA Workshop, Leadership Academy)

Engaging the RBS Community, the Coast Guard and the States (Annual Conference).

Partnering with the U.S. Coast Guard & Recreational Boating Community to Implement the National Recreational Boating Safety Strategic Plan: NASBLA and the States

*U.S. Coast Guard Nonprofit Grant Report
from the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators*

Executive Summary

There is no other organization like the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) that brings together nationally the state recreational boating safety agencies for public policy development, communicating strategies, coordination, information sharing, education and training. This fact is recognized in the **2012-2016 National Recreational Boating Safety Strategic Plan** with NASBLA being named as an implementing partner in 42% of the strategies. Additionally, the states are named as implementing partners in 34% of the strategies. Together, NASBLA and the states are THE major contributors to the implementation and success of the National RBS Program. In fact, state recreational boating safety programs are responsible for the annual implementation of more than 95% of all boating safety expenditures nationwide including boating law enforcement, boating safety education, public access, aids to navigation and a range of other boating safety services.

The National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) sought and received a grant: Partnering with the U.S. Coast Guard & Recreational Boating Community to Implement the National Recreational Boating Safety Strategic Plan: NASBLA and the States - Grant No. 3314FAN140213, from October 1, 2014 - September 30, 2015. NASBLA completed this work by:

- Developing Policy Solutions and Products (Committee Work)
- Communicating Strategies to the States and Others (*Small Craft Advisory*, E-newsletter, connected community)
- Coordinating State Program Administration and Performance Measurement (Spring BLA Workshop, Leadership Academy)
- Engaging the RBS Community, the Coast Guard and the States (NASBLA Annual Conference)

Although federal trust funds provide as much as one-fourth of the national RBS program's annual funding, virtually all of the program's major objectives – enforcement, education, registration and accident investigation – are accomplished at the state and local levels by the state boating law administration agencies in the 56 states and territories. **With this grant, NASBLA helps the states and territories meet the national program objectives.**

Project Description

Project Goal

The goal of the *Partnering with the U.S. Coast Guard & Recreational Boating Community to Implement the National Recreational Boating Safety Strategic Plan*: NASBLA and the States grant program is to partner with the U.S. Coast Guard in carrying out the strategies in the [2012-2016 National Recreational Boating Safety Strategic Plan](#), in order to advance the mission of the national program: to ensure the public has a safe, secure and enjoyable recreational boating experience by implementing programs designed to minimize the loss of life, personal injury and property damage while cooperating with environmental and national security efforts.

Project Objectives

The objectives for *Partnering with the U.S. Coast Guard & Recreational Boating Community to Implement the National Recreational Boating Safety Strategic Plan*: NASBLA and the States include:

a) Developing Policy Solutions and Products that:

- enhance uniformity and reciprocity of boating safety efforts among jurisdictions;
- provide forums to encourage uniformity, reciprocity, closer cooperation and assistance in developing, administering, and enforcing state laws and regulations pertaining to boating safety;
- encourage sufficient patrol and other activities to ensure adequate enforcement of state boating safety laws and regulations;
- facilitate an adequate USCG-recognized state boating safety education program;
- enhance maintenance of USCG-approved vessel numbering system; and
- strengthen the implementation of a USCG-approved marine casualty reporting system.

b) Communicating Strategies to the States and Others – providing a national RBS communications conduit to grassroots law enforcement officials and state and federal policymakers through [Small Craft Advisory](#) – the nation’s award-winning recreational boating safety magazine (become online only with this grant); [NASBLA Currents](#), a weekly electronic newsletter; social media – [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#); [NASBLA’s Connected Community](#) for online professional networking and knowledge management; and other outreach media and platforms.

c) Coordinating State Program Administration and Performance Measurement – conducting a spring [workshop for boating law administrators](#) to discuss methods, means and resources for improved administration of the state RBS programs as well as provide a summer [Leadership Academy](#) for BLAs and program administrators to provide fast-track, high-impact professional development for those who are new to the administration of the recreational boating safety program.

d) Engaging the RBS Community, the Coast Guard and the States – hosting a dynamic, interactive [annual conference](#) that brings together boating law administrators, state staff and other RBS stakeholders.

e) Develop an effective instrument for surveying the states – discover how the partnership funded through this grant provides for public policy development, communicating strategies, coordination, information sharing, education and training that leads to greater uniformity.

Methodology

This grant provided funding for the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators in four primary areas:

- a) Developing Policy Solutions and Products – Research, staffing and meeting support for committee projects, products and publications, including policy staffing and travel assistance for the president and executive board and policy committees to support national RBS policy-making and partnership initiatives;
- b) Communicating Strategies to the States and Others – Production, printing and distribution of NASBLA’s award-winning magazine, *Small Craft Advisory*; the online [NASBLA Membership Directory](#); [NASBLA website](#); [e-newsletters](#); Basecamp project management tool; phone and web conferencing services; NASBLA’s Connected Community; survey management and distribution; and NASBLA’s learning management platform; and staffing to implement these tools;
- c) Coordinating State Program Administration and Performance Measurement – planning and logistical support for the Spring [Boating Law Administrators Workshop](#) and the summer [Leadership Academy](#);
- d) Engaging the RBS Community, the Coast Guard and the States – staffing, planning, logistical and program support for the [NASBLA Annual Conference](#).

Developing Policy Solutions and Products (Committee Work)

For more than 50 years, NASBLA has employed a committee structure to identify issues and address needs in the recreational boating safety public policy realm. NASBLA’s committees function as the primary source, sounding board and national policy-setting forum for each of the significant program areas addressed in the [National Recreational Boating Safety Strategic Plan](#) -- enforcement, education, vessel numbering and marine casualty reporting. These committees develop best management practices, model procedures, [model acts](#), position papers, outreach materials, research libraries and other products that advance recreational boating safety as well as serve as a network of subject matter experts.

The committees also play a vital role with respect to shaping a national response to a given challenge, problem or issue. Some issues impacting boating safety are resolved simply through open discussion and the exchange of ideas and experience. On the other end of the spectrum, more entrenched or long-term challenges may ultimately require a statutory or regulatory response to affect the desired outcome. NASBLA committees help the Coast Guard and other policymakers at the state and federal levels determine and coordinate the appropriate response.

The [NASBLA policy committees](#), and by extension the NASBLA executive board and staff, are one of the key mechanisms the association utilizes to encourage uniformity and reciprocity among jurisdictions.

In addition to the state committee members, the committees include broad representation from boating professionals throughout the boating industry, the nonprofit sector, international interests, the boating public, and federal and local agencies.

NASBLA committees include:

Education & Outreach Committee

The [Education & Outreach Committee](#) works to advance boating safety by developing recommendations based on best practices in education for the states to implement; and creating a library of state marketing campaigns and outreach materials for other states to use. Among the issues addressed in 2015 were:

- The inaugural [Spring Aboard](#) event was launched in April 2015. The launch included dedicated web pages on NASBLA.org, a [Spring Aboard Facebook](#) account, and a [Twitter](#) account. Partners could register for recognition on the site, but they could also participate without registration. Eighteen partnering agencies and organizations completed the process of registration.
- [Model Act for Life Jackets](#) – Updated language based on the Final Rule, published September 22, 2014. Revisions adopted by membership September 15, 2015.
- Analysis was completed based on age groupings involved in the 10 types of highest casualty events through 2013. Results were presented at the NASBLA Annual Conference and in a webinar in order to illustrate the potential effectiveness of media messaging. [Linking Accident Statistics to Successful Marketing & Outreach Campaigns](#) webinar.
- [Best Practices for Life Jacket Fitting](#) – committee developed best practices addressing how to properly fit a life jacket on children and adults. A video demonstrating proper fit through a partnership with BoatEd and is posted online.
- [Education Reciprocity](#) - A survey on education reciprocity, a draft policy position, interactive map and minor modifications have been developed for the NASBLA Model Act for Mandatory Boating Safety Education. Work will continue on this project in FY16. Map is located at:
<http://share.imapbuilder.com/view/17437012/9acfcfdf1dd2e2508c9e7f63684323d/imap5.html>

A committee final report is available at: <http://www.nasbla.org/rbs2015grant>.

Enforcement & Training Committee

The Enforcement & Training Committee works to advance boating safety by researching and disseminating information on new techniques and technologies for marine law enforcement officers; developing training and credentialing programs; and addressing boating under the influence issues. Among the issues addressed in 2015 were:

Completed research on boat stops made solely for safety inspections without articulable suspicion or probable cause and developed a listing of court decision summaries and a spreadsheet showing current policies from around the NASBLA community. A list of the court decisions is available online here:

<http://www.nasbla.org/suspicion>

Continued to develop a series of articles for SCA and Currents on the merits of the "Teaching Moment" to inspire the expanded use of NASBLA-produced informational products that promote boating safety best practices:

[Have you really tried on an inflatable life jacket?](#)

[Knowledge of the Rules of the Road is no accident](#)

[Verbal guidance on the waterways -- Enhancing the teachable moment](#)

[Teachable moments do make a difference](#)

Developed a Model Act for Commercial Parasailing Requirements. It was adopted by membership September 15, 2015. A copy of the model act is here:

http://www.nasbla.org/files/Model_Acts/Parasailing_Model_Act_Adopted_091515.pdf

A committee final report is available at: <http://www.nasbla.org/rbs2015grant>.

Engineering, Reporting & Analysis Committee

The Engineering, Reporting & Analysis Committee (ERAC) is charged with identifying, evaluating and analyzing data and information that can shed light on factors associated with recreational boating accidents, inform the development of boating safety policies and practices, and ultimately measure their effectiveness. To ensure that the results of boating accident research and analyses are valid and reliable, ERAC is directed to actively seek ways to advance the quality, relevance, accuracy, consistency, applicability and completeness of the data and information. Among the issues addressed in 2015 were:

Lead the association's response to the request for comments on the draft [Recreational Boating Accident Reporting Manual, COMDTINST M16782.1](#).

Completed a "[Electric Shock Drowning / Near Drowning Response and Investigation Checklist](#)" that can be customized to incorporate jurisdiction-specific provisions and contacts, is designed to assist officers, investigators, and other first responders in accurate recognition and reporting of ESD events. The checklist covers basic, critical actions and information for use in making the initial response, assessment, and determination of the reportability of the suspected or confirmed incident.

Completed [general guidance for the state boating law administrator](#) dealing with electric shock drowning (ESD)-related proposals or whose agency has an interest in drafting legislation on their own initiative. It outlines important elements to consider when reviewing or drafting ESD-related legislation, but could be adapted to address safety issues that arise following other tragic boating accidents.

The ESD guidance along with other documents, and links to key resource organizations and individuals are available at <http://www.nasbla.org/ESDResources>, a dedicated page in the [Get Equipped](#) portal of the [NASBLA Lighthouse](#). It provides basic information (supplied by the American Boat & Yacht Council) in the form of FAQ on what ESD is, how common it is, where and how it happens, what it does to the body, how it is identified, and applicable technical standards for prevention.

The [NASBLA Lighthouse](#) was more fully developed by ERAC into a subsection of the NASBLA website. The product consists of a launch page, seven portals and interactive discussion/library components on the Lighthouse community in NASBLA Connect.

Completed work on the standardized [State-Level Statistical Report Template](#): —A tool designed for states to more easily and accurately compile and report out their state-level recreational boating accident and related statistics. On July 29, 2015, the revised, working template was delivered to the U.S. Coast Guard to begin work with the BARD contractor on developing the report into the system.

Released a research brief, "[Recreational Boating Fatality Statistics: an exploration of fatality rate calculations and comparisons.](#)"

A committee final report is available at: <http://www.nasbla.org/rbs2015grant>.

Vessel Identification, Registration & Titling Committee

Recognizing that accurate vessel information is the backbone of recreational boating safety data, the Vessel Identification, Registration & Titling Committee works to advance boating safety by analyzing and advocating for thorough and precise vessel identification throughout a vessel's chain of ownership from the hull numbering to registration to titling. Among the issues addressed in 2015 were:

Assisted the states and worked with the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws Enactment Committee, to promote adoption of the [Uniform Certificate of Title for Vessels Act](#).

Expanded the use and development of educational products to inform states and their agents about hull identification number (HIN) validation. Promoted the use of the "[HIN Verification and Validation](#)" PowerPoint presentation.

Led a discussion at the BLA Workshop and delivered a presentation - [Changes to the Standard Numbering System & Vessel Identification System: Implications for the States](#) - at the 2015 NASBLA Annual Conference on regulatory changes in the Standard Numbering System, Vessel Identification System, and Boating Accident Report Database. Final rule issued March 28, 2012. Deadline for states to begin HIN Validation is January 1, 2017. The conference session focused on lessons learned from states that have already implemented the changes as well as an overview of the changes that need to be made.

Delivered a session at the NASBLA Annual Conference a session on the benefits and functionality of the [Vessel Identification System \(VIS\)](#) and success stories from states that are already using it.

[Surveyed state agency BLAs](#), registration & titling and law enforcement contacts in each state and territory about their use and any issues with the Vessel Identification System.

Revised [Model Procedures for: Replacing Vessel Hull Identification Numbers & Assigning Vessel Hull Identification Numbers](#). The procedures were adopted by the membership on September 15, 2015.

A committee final report is available at: <http://www.nasbla.org/rbs2015grant>.

NASBLA's public policy work is a year-round endeavor. The process begins at the close of the NASBLA annual conference. Building upon or continuing the previous year's work and with suggestions for new issues needing attention, staff draft the first round of charges and proposed committee membership for discussion. This draft is utilized by volunteer committee chairmen and the volunteer NASBLA Executive Board to select those charges that are most critical and that address issues identified in the National RBS and NASBLA strategic plans.

After the executive board, committee chairs and staff agree on charges for the year, teleconferences commence in late fall to kick off the committees' work for the year. Charges are assigned and members work on these charges. The subcommittees and full committee meet in person – typically in conjunction with another national RBS meeting in the spring. Over the course of the meetings, subcommittees discuss and debate their work and then the full committee comes together to consider all subcommittee work. Further work is assigned if needed. Work continues on charges throughout the summer. The committees convene again in the fall at the NASBLA annual conference and present their charges and work products to the RBS community and to NASBLA membership for consideration and adoption.

This grant proposal provided funding for committee staff time, for travel for committee members to attend their respective late winter/early spring meetings and for other direct costs associated with development of committee products.

Communicating Strategies to the States (*Small Craft Advisory* and other platforms)

The second grant-funded vehicle for addressing elements of the National RBS Strategic Plan involved providing – through a variety of channels – a national RBS communications conduit to grassroots law enforcement, education, accident investigation and vessel numbering & titling officials and state and federal policymakers. Key to this communication strategy is the association's award-winning periodical, *Small Craft Advisory* (SCA). At least five times during the grant year, SCA is published for boating safety professionals, policy and decision-makers, state legislators, members of Congress, Coast Guard personnel and recreational boating industry leaders to keep them informed on issues impacting recreational boating safety. Beginning with this grant, SCA was published only online.

For nearly 30 years, SCA has been the primary source of RBS news and policy developments to marine officers in the field, and this group of dedicated boating professionals continues to be a primary audience for the magazine. However, the magazine's editors also recognize a broader readership and strive to include feature stories and analysis that will inform and educate all elements of the recreational boating safety community.

To view copies of back issues of the magazine for the FY15 year, please visit <http://sca.nasbla.org/>

NASBLA Currents, a general RBS e-newsletter, delivers weekly NASBLA news and information to state members, associates and other stakeholders. Archived issues of *Currents* are available on the NASBLA website at: <http://multibriefs.com/briefs/NASBLA/>

NASBLA Connect, <http://community.nasbla.org>, provides our members and the RBS Community innovative ways to think together and build trusted communities where interactive communication and information exchange can occur. NASBLA Connect allows people to contribute, share and collaborate.

Other communications tools that NASBLA utilizes for RBS community engagement included Basecamp, which provides web-based project management and collaboration, and Go To Meeting, a web conferencing and online meeting platform.

Coordinating State Program Administration and Performance Measurement (Spring BLA Workshop and Summer Leadership Academy)

Another method of advancing the goals of the NASBLA and the National RBS strategic plans is the [Spring Boating Law Administrator Workshop](#), March 4-5, 2015. This two-day working session provided a mid-year opportunity for boating law administrators, key Coast Guard personnel and NASBLA staff to discuss and coordinate policy, programs and performance measures for the recreational boating safety program. Topics covered at the workshop included:

U.S. Coast Guard Update	Operation Dry Water
RBS State Grant Program Discussion for BLAs	Recreational Boating Professional Certification
National RBS Program State Financial Grant Update	Beyond Human Factors
NASBLA's 2015 Most Wanted	Uniform Certificate of Title for Vessels Act
Texas Flats Boat Update	Regulatory Changes in the SNS, VIS and BARD
Spring Aboard	

This workshop attracts more BLAs than any other recreational boating safety meeting in the spring.

The Leadership Academy is held each summer and offers a weeklong itinerary of intense seminar-style training and professional development for new BLAs and program administrators. The Academy strengthens the participants' capabilities and capacity to support national RBS strategic plan objectives. Additionally, the curriculum provides professional development opportunities intended to enhance the attendees' management, relationship building and interpersonal communication skills. Participants are also exposed to every aspect of the national RBS program and how it is applied in their select states and elsewhere to achieve our RBS goals. Topics covered at the 2015 academy included:

- DISC Behavioral & Values/Motivators Assessments
- History of the Recreational Boating Safety Program
- Overview of the Certified Recreational Boating Professional (CRBP) Domains
- Data Resources, Collection, Analysis and Use in Program Development
- Federal Vessel Numbering Requirements and State Implementation
- All About NASBLA
- Practical Overview of Waterway Management Issues
- Boater Education and the National Recreational Boating Safety Program
- Marine Law Enforcement and the National Recreational Boating Safety Program
- Practical Lessons of Leadership
- Using Strategic Marketing, Community and Media Relations to Advance Program Efforts
- Introduction to Partnerships/ Key NASBLA Partners and How We 'Fit' Together
- USCG Auxiliary - State Liaison Program
- United States Power Squadrons - State Liaison Program
- National Safe Boating Council
- National Water Safety Congress
- Overview of Paddling, Rowing, Sailing, and Other User Groups
- National RBS State Grant Program – A Financial Overview
- National RBS State Grant Program – A Program Overview
- Reauthorization, Sport Fish Restoration & Boating Trust Fund 101
- A Look at the USCG State Visit Compliance Worksheet

- Future Thinking - New Demographic, Social and Economic Realities, and Recreational Boating Law Issues

Engaging the RBS Community, the Coast Guard and the States (Annual Conference)

The [NASBLA Annual Conference](#) is *the premier* national recreational boating safety forum. Boating law administrators and others in the RBS community throughout North America learn from subject matter experts, hear about cutting-edge research and exceptional best practices, and discover new ideas for programs that minimize the loss of life, personal injury and property damage.

The NASBLA annual conference brings together approximately 300 people representing more than 100 stakeholder organizations in the recreational boating safety community, including more than 50 state boating law agencies. **No other event brings together this diverse group of RBS stakeholders, non-governmental organizations, U.S. and Canadian federal agencies, and the Coast Guard itself.**

Examples of topics covered in the 2015 annual conference include:

- NASBLA Workshop & Committee Meeting/Reports
- Drowning: Resuscitation and Terminology
- Maritime PRO Association
- Collaborative Response to BUI
- Linking Accident Statistics to Successful Marketing & Outreach Campaigns
- Evolving Trends in Maritime Arresting Technologies & Navigation Systems
- Report on USCG Boating Safety Outreach
- Boating Education Standards – Knowledge and Skills
- Training & Technology Needs of the Future for Maritime Law Enforcement
- Paddlesports Workshop
- Is Legalized Marijuana Effecting Marine Law Enforcement?
- Saved by the Beacon
- Geospatial Intelligence & How It Can Impact Maritime Law Enforcement
- Law Enforcement Body Camera Use, Integration & Lessons Learned
- Water Wits: K-12 Education Program
- Advancing Boater Education and Training: Developing Skill-Program Conformity
- Assessment Based on National Skill Standards
- How You Can Impact National Scientific Research and Its Application to Maritime
- Public Safety
- Education Dashboard: Tool Development for State Program Benchmarking and Planning
- Operation Distress Connect - USCG Digital Selective Calling
- How Kansas Went From Worst to First in Hull Identification Number Accuracy:
- Automated Detection System & Inspection Program
- Social Marketing – What is it? Why is it so hard?
- What makes it easier?
- Social Marketing – What is it? Why is it so hard? What makes it easier?
- Operation Dry Water
- Spring Aboard Campaign
- Reciprocity Town Hall Meeting

PowerPoints of many of these presentations are available at: <http://www.nasbla.org/wichita>

Executive Management and RBS Outreach

The NASBLA president, executive director and executive board members are called upon to provide information to congressional committees and staff regarding boating safety issues of national consequence and to provide technical advice and educational materials relating to the states' experience in managing boating safety programs. The board considers and further develops project research plans submitted by committee leadership. It also monitors the committees' progress in addressing the charges set forth in the project plan.

The board allocates resources from the grant award to facilitate committee meetings, projects and products and assures that the grant is administered according to guidelines and procedures prescribed by law. The work of the board and the overall grant program is supported by the executive director and policy staff. The staff provides professional support to the board and the committees, including conference and meeting planning and onsite staffing, grant and project management, research, financial management, public information, and member support.

The NASBLA president, executive director and their designees provide liaison to other national boating safety organizations, industry and trade groups, and related associations. Through the president's office, NASBLA works to formulate national consensus among all the stakeholders in the boating community. In a typical year, NASBLA representatives participate in as many as 20-25 national and international meetings, hearings and boating safety forums, including, but not limited to, the U.S. Coast Guard, the National Boating Safety Advisory Council, the National Transportation Safety Board, the American Boat and Yacht Council, the International Boating and Water Safety Summit, the National Boating Federation, the National Safe Boating Council, the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, the United States Power Squadrons, National Safe Boating Week and other national recreational, safety and transportation events.

For the FY15 outreach program, NASBLA continued the successful efforts of its executive board with assistance for three interim board meetings and one final board meeting held in conjunction with the NASBLA annual conference in Wichita, Kansas. Board meetings were held as follows:

December 11 - 12, 2014	Jacksonville, Florida
March 2, 2015	Lexington, Kentucky
July 19 - 20, 2015	Lexington, Kentucky
September 12, 2015	Wichita, Kansas

Minutes from these meetings are available at: <http://www.nasbla.org/rbs2015grant>.

Also, as requested by the Coast Guard, NASBLA developed a report on uniformity of select boating safety laws across the U.S. This year, the focus was on education reciprocity. A copy of this report is available at http://www.nasbla.org/files/committees/2015_Reports/EDU_P&BP-2015-4B-Reciprocity_Report.pdf. As part of this effort, an Education Reciprocity Town Hall meeting was held at the NASBLA Annual conference. The presentation, including results from audience polling are available at: http://www.nasbla.org/files/Education/Reciprocity_Town_Hall_Meeting_Wichita_Final_Results.pdf.