

LAW ENFORCEMENT mDL TOOLKIT

DOC-06

Funding Strategies & Opportunities

DOJ, USDOT/FMCSA, NHTSA, State Programs, Cooperative Purchasing, and OpEx Models

Audience	Grant Writers, Finance Officers, Command Staff
Purpose	Identifies and describes the full range of funding mechanisms available to law enforcement agencies for acquiring mDL reader hardware, software, integration services, and training — including DOJ criminal justice grants, USDOT/FMCSA commercial vehicle safety grants, NHTSA highway safety and traffic records grants administered through state highway safety offices, cooperative purchasing vehicles, and alternative financing models.
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Important Disclaimer

This document is intended to serve as general guidance to assist law enforcement agencies in identifying potential funding opportunities for mDL reader technology. It is not an authoritative legal or financial resource and should not be relied upon as such.

Grant program availability, eligibility requirements, funding levels, application deadlines, and allowable uses are subject to change with each fiscal year and are determined by Congressional appropriations, agency rulemaking, and individual Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) documents. Information in this document may not reflect the most current program requirements.

Before initiating any grant application, agencies are strongly advised to: (1) consult the official NOFO published on Grants.gov or the administering agency's website for the current fiscal year; (2) contact the administering agency's grants management office directly to confirm eligibility and allowable uses; (3) engage your state's designated pass-through agency for formula programs; and (4) consult qualified legal and financial counsel as appropriate.

AAMVA makes no representations or warranties regarding the accuracy, completeness, or currency of the funding information contained in this document. References to specific programs, funding amounts, deadlines, or agency contacts are provided for informational purposes only.

Overview and Funding Strategy

mDL reader technology sits at the intersection of criminal justice, commercial vehicle safety, highway safety, and transportation technology — a rare characteristic that opens funding eligibility across multiple federal agencies simultaneously. Agencies are encouraged to pursue a blended strategy, matching each cost component (hardware, software, integration, training) to the most appropriate funding source.

Core Funding Strategy Principle

Because mDL readers serve multiple missions — general law enforcement, motor carrier enforcement, and traffic crash data quality — the same deployment may be justifiable under DOJ, FMCSA, and NHTSA grant programs. Agencies with motor carrier inspection units should explore FMCSA channels in parallel with DOJ channels, and coordinate with their state highway safety office on crash data quality angles. A blended multi-source strategy both increases total available funding and reduces dependency on any single grant program.

Understanding Grant Types: Formula, Competitive, and Invitational

Before pursuing any grant program, agency staff must understand the fundamental differences in how each type of funding is accessed. Misunderstanding this structure is the single most common cause of wasted grant writing effort.

Grant Type	How Agencies Access It	Examples in This Document
Formula (Non-Competitive)	Allocated to states by statutory formula (population, road miles, etc.). States sub-award to eligible local agencies through annual solicitation processes. No competition with other agencies nationally.	JAG (formula portion), NHTSA Sec. 402, NHTSA Sec. 405(c), MCSAP, HSGP/SHSP, SLCGP
Competitive (Discretionary)	Agencies apply directly and compete nationally or regionally. Awards are based on merit, project design, and alignment with program priorities.	HP-CMV, HP-ITD, BWC Policy & Implementation Program, NIJ Demonstration
Invitational (Earmark)	Agency MUST be specifically named in a Congressional appropriations document (the Joint Explanatory Statement). No open competition. Requires proactive Congressional engagement.	COPS TEP — see note in that section

Note on Funding Availability

Funding levels, deadlines, and program details vary from fiscal year to fiscal year based on Congressional appropriations. Always consult the current Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) on Grants.gov or the administering agency's website for current figures before preparing an application.

U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) Grant Programs

Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program

The JAG program is the broadest and most accessible federal funding source for state and local law enforcement technology. Administered by the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), JAG funds can cover mDL reader hardware, software licenses, CAD/FBR integration development, and officer training. With no matching funds requirement for formula awards and broad eligible use categories, JAG is typically the first funding source agencies should pursue.

Detail	Information
Administering Agency	Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), U.S. Department of Justice

Grant Type	Formula (non-competitive, state/local allocation) and Discretionary (competitive). Most agencies access formula funds through their State Administering Agency (SAA).
Eligible Uses for mDL	Law enforcement equipment and technology; criminal justice information sharing systems; officer training; planning, evaluation, and technology improvement programs
Match Requirement	None for formula JAG. Verify for any discretionary solicitation.
Application Path	Formula: through your State Administering Agency (SAA) — contact your state's SAA to identify current solicitation cycles and deadlines. Discretionary: justgrants.usdoj.gov
JAG Purpose Areas	For mDL projects, cite: 'Law Enforcement Programs' and 'Planning, Evaluation, and Technology Improvement Programs.' For CMV-focused mDL readers, also cite 'Law Enforcement Equipment.'
Website	bja.ojp.gov

✓ Grant Writing Tip — JAG

Clearly articulate the operational problem: officers encountering mDLs without tools to read them; manual data entry errors causing missed criminal hits during NCIC queries; re-entry time that reduces patrol capacity. Quantify where possible: number of officers receiving readers, estimated time savings per stop, projected reduction in data entry errors. Reference AAMVA data on state mDL adoption rates to show the problem is growing — officers will encounter mDLs whether the agency is ready or not.

COPS Office Technology Programs

The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) has invested over \$20 billion in policing since 1994. Two COPS programs are relevant to mDL technology, with very different eligibility structures.

Technology and Equipment Program (TEP) — Invitational/Earmark

⚠ Important — COPS TEP Is Not an Open Competition

COPS TEP is a noncompetitive, invitational program. To be eligible, your agency must be specifically named in the Congressional Joint Explanatory Statement (JES) accompanying the annual Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act. Agencies not in the JES cannot apply regardless of project merit. Agencies seeking future inclusion should engage their congressional delegation proactively — see the Strategy for Unlisted Agencies row in the table below.

Detail	Information
Administering Agency	COPS Office, U.S. Department of Justice
Grant Type	Noncompetitive, Invitational (earmark). Named agencies only. No local match requirement.
Eligible Applicants	ONLY agencies named in the current fiscal year's Congressional Joint Explanatory Statement (JES) under 'COPS Technology and Equipment Community Projects / COPS Law Enforcement Technology and Equipment.'
Strategy for Unlisted Agencies	Contact your U.S. House and Senate offices. Congressional staff handle appropriations requests; submit a concise project description and cost estimate. Requests for the following fiscal year are typically due to congressional offices in January–February. Engage your state's law enforcement association to support multi-agency requests.
Website	cops.usdoj.gov/tep

Community Policing Development (CPD) Microgrants

Detail	Information
Administering Agency	COPS Office, U.S. Department of Justice
Grant Type	Competitive
Eligible Uses for mDL	Innovative community policing strategies. mDL readers that reduce friction in officer-community interactions (faster, less intrusive verification) may qualify under the technology innovation category.
Match Requirement	Verify in current NOFO
Availability Note	This program's availability varies by fiscal year; it has been zeroed out in some years. Confirm current status on the COPS website before investing application effort.
Website	cops.usdoj.gov/grants

BJA Body-Worn Camera Policy and Implementation Program (BWCPIP)

The BWCPIP is included as a creative but legitimate nexus for agencies that already operate or plan to launch body-worn camera programs.

The BJA BWCPIP is a competitive grant program that funds law enforcement and correctional agencies in piloting, establishing, or expanding body-worn camera programs. For agencies with active BWC deployments, mDL reader technology has a genuine evidence management nexus: mDL data captured during a stop becomes part of the digital evidence record associated with BWC footage, improving chain-of-custody documentation and data integrity.

Detail	Information
Administering Agency	Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), U.S. Department of Justice
Grant Type	Competitive
Eligible Uses for mDL	Digital evidence management integration; streamlining transfer of digital evidence from law enforcement to prosecutors; cross-agency evidence sharing and data integration
mDL Nexus	mDL data captured at point of contact (cryptographic identity, license status, photo) is timestamped digital evidence linked to the BWC footage of the same encounter. mDL-BWC integration strengthens evidentiary foundation and chain-of-custody documentation. Frame as 'digital evidence management and integration.'
Match Requirement	None for most categories — verify in current NOFO
Website	bja.ojp.gov — search Body-Worn Camera Partnership Program

✓ Grant Writing Tip — BWCPIP

Frame mDL reader procurement as a 'digital evidence capture and management' investment, not merely an identity verification tool. The key narrative: when an officer reads an mDL, the cryptographically authenticated identity data and license status is timestamped and linked to the concurrent BWC footage — creating a more complete, more defensible evidentiary record than manual notation. Cite BWCPIP program objectives around improving the evidentiary value of BWC footage and streamlining evidence transfer to prosecutors.

NIJ Technology Demonstration Grants

NIJ demonstration grants are a pilot-site pathway especially valuable for agencies willing to generate performance data for the broader law enforcement community.

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ), the research, development, and evaluation arm of the DOJ, funds technology demonstration and evaluation projects. For agencies willing to serve as a structured pilot site for mDL acceptance technology, NIJ grants provide both funding and a national platform for disseminating results.

Detail	Information
Administering Agency	National Institute of Justice (NIJ), U.S. Department of Justice
Grant Type	Competitive
Relevant Programs	Law Enforcement Technology (LET) research and evaluation grants; Science and Technology funding opportunities. Monitor nij.ojp.gov/funding/current for open solicitations.
Eligible Uses for mDL	Pilot-site implementation and structured evaluation of mDL verification technology; development of performance metrics and best practices; officer workflow and safety impact studies
Strategic Value	NIJ-funded demonstration projects generate published performance data that strengthens future JAG, NHTSA, and FMCSA grant applications. Serving as an NIJ pilot site also generates national visibility and establishes the agency as a technology leader.
Website	nij.ojp.gov

U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) / FEMA Grant Programs

FEMA Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP)

HSGP funds may support mDL reader technology when framed around emergency preparedness, interoperability, or information-sharing objectives. The Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) component is most applicable for larger metropolitan agencies. Frame the grant narrative around mDL integration with CAD/RMS as an identity verification and information-sharing capability that supports incident response and jurisdictional interoperability.

Detail	Information
Administering Agency	FEMA, DHS; distributed through State Administrative Agencies (SAAs)
Grant Type	Formula sub-award (SHSP and UASI); no match requirement
LETPA Requirement	A percentage of SHSP and UASI funds must support Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Activities (LETPA) — the specific percentage is set annually in the NOFO. mDL identity authentication investments may qualify.
mDL Nexus	Digital identity authentication is a homeland security capability. mDL readers that cryptographically verify government-issued credentials at point of contact directly support HSGP's prevention and identity assurance missions. Frame as 'identity verification and authentication technology' rather than 'driver's license reader.'
Access Path	Apply through your state's designated State Administrative Agency (SAA). UASI funds are limited to eligible high-risk urban areas as determined annually by FEMA. Contact your state homeland security office for state-specific solicitation cycles and deadlines.

Website	fema.gov/grants/preparedness/homeland-security
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State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program (SLCGP)

CISA's SLCGP funds cybersecurity improvements at state and local levels. The CJIS-compliant software infrastructure and secure data handling components of mDL integration may qualify, particularly for agencies upgrading reader software and CAD/RMS integration middleware.

Detail	Information
Administering Agency	CISA, DHS; distributed through state cybersecurity offices
Grant Type	Formula sub-award; state must have an approved Cybersecurity Plan
mDL Nexus	The cryptographic Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) that enables mDL trust chain validation — certificate authority integration, AAMVA Digital Trust Service connectivity, FIPS 140-2 compliant encryption — is a cybersecurity infrastructure investment. Agencies upgrading CAD/RMS middleware for mDL integration may be able to frame PKI and secure communications components under SLCGP.
Practical Application	SLCGP is best suited for the software infrastructure and cybersecurity compliance components of mDL deployment (CJIS ISA requirements, encrypted data handling, audit logging) rather than for reader hardware procurement.
Access Path	Contact your state's designated cybersecurity office or SAA. States must develop and maintain an approved Cybersecurity Plan to access SLCGP funds.
Website	fema.gov/grants/preparedness/state-local-cybersecurity-grant-program

U.S. Department of Transportation — FMCSA Grant Programs

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) administers grant programs specifically targeting the safety and enforcement of commercial motor vehicles (CMVs). For agencies with motor carrier enforcement responsibilities, mDL reader technology has a direct and compelling nexus to FMCSA's mission: commercial driver's license (CDL) holders present mDLs, and officers who can verify those credentials quickly and accurately — and port the data directly into inspection reports — improve both enforcement efficiency and data quality. Agencies should engage their state MCSAP lead agency to explore these channels.

Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program (MCSAP) — Formula Grant

MCSAP is FMCSA's largest grant program and the foundational formula funding stream for state commercial vehicle enforcement activities. MCSAP funds flow to designated state MCSAP lead agencies (typically state police or DOT enforcement divisions), which may sub-award or coordinate with local agencies.

Detail	Information
Administering Agency	FMCSA; distributed to state MCSAP lead agencies (typically state police or DOT)
Grant Type	Formula (non-competitive)
Eligible Uses for mDL	CMV inspection technology, enforcement officer equipment, safety data improvement, traffic enforcement supporting CMV safety
Match Requirement	Varies; consult the current MCSAP Comprehensive Policy (MCP)
mDL Nexus	CDL holders present mDLs; mDL readers speed up inspection initiation and

	allow auto-population of roadside inspection reports, reducing transcription errors in MCMIS data
Application Path	Through your state MCSAP lead agency and the Commercial Vehicle Safety Plan (CVSP) process. Contact your FMCSA Division Office to identify your state's lead agency and current CVSP cycle.
Local Agency Access	Local law enforcement agencies generally cannot apply directly for MCSAP formula funds. However, state MCSAP lead agencies can sub-award, coordinate, or provide equipment to local agencies engaged in CMV enforcement. Agencies with active truck enforcement programs should engage their state police CMV/motor carrier division.
Website	fmcsa.dot.gov/grants ai.fmcsa.dot.gov/Grants/MCSAP.aspx

High Priority — Innovative Technology Deployment (HP-ITD) Grant

The HP-ITD program is FMCSA's dedicated grant for deploying intelligent transportation system applications that advance CMV enforcement. It directly funds technology that automates data collection, links federal and state motor carrier information systems, and reduces costs associated with CMV operations and regulatory compliance.

Detail	Information
Administering Agency	FMCSA (discretionary/competitive)
Eligible Applicants	States, D.C., Puerto Rico, and U.S. territories ONLY. Applicant must have an FMCSA-approved Program Plan/Top Level Design (PP/TLD). If not the lead ITD agency, an MOU with the lead agency is required.
Eligible Uses for mDL	Deployment of technology to automate CMV enforcement data collection and display; linking federal motor carrier safety information systems with state CMV systems; improving safety and productivity of commercial drivers; electronic inspection capabilities including CMV driver authentication
mDL Nexus	mDL readers that auto-populate roadside inspection reports, link to MCMIS/SAFER, and verify CDL validity at point of contact fit squarely within HP-ITD's mission of 'simplifying enforcement operations by automating data collection, transfer, and display'
Application Path	Apply on grants.gov ; requires approved PP/TLD. Contact: FMCSAHPGRANTS@dot.gov
Website	ai.fmcsa.dot.gov/Grants/ITD.aspx

High Priority — Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety (HP-CMV) Grant

The HP-CMV program funds CMV safety activities including new technology demonstrations, safety data improvement projects, and targeting unsafe driving in high-risk corridors. Unlike HP-ITD, HP-CMV is open to a broader range of eligible applicants including local governments and nonprofits.

Detail	Information
Administering Agency	FMCSA (discretionary/competitive)
Eligible Applicants	State government agencies; local governments (county, city, township, special district); federally recognized tribal governments; nonprofits with 501(c)(3) status. For-profit organizations are NOT eligible.
Eligible Uses for mDL	Demonstrating new technologies to improve CMV safety, safety data improvement, targeting unsafe driving in high-risk crash corridors, public education on CMV safety
mDL Nexus	mDL reader pilots that improve CDL verification accuracy at CMV inspections,

	reduce MCMIS data entry errors, or demonstrate technology use in high-risk corridor truck enforcement
Application Path	Annual NOFO released typically in Q1 on grants.gov . Review current NOFO for specific eligible priorities.
Website	ai.fmcsa.dot.gov/Grants/HighPriority.aspx

High Priority — Enforcement Training and Support (HP-ETS) Grant

⚠ HP-ETS Eligibility — Nonprofit Organizations Only

HP-ETS is restricted EXCLUSIVELY to 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations with expertise in training non-federal employees. Government agencies — including state police, local law enforcement, and state DOTs — are NOT eligible to apply directly. Law enforcement agencies seeking HP-ETS-funded mDL training must partner with an eligible nonprofit (e.g., CVSA, IACP, or a state law enforcement training academy organized as a nonprofit) to serve as the applicant; the LE agency becomes the training recipient.

Detail	Information
Administering Agency	FMCSA (discretionary, cooperative agreement)
Eligible Applicants	EXCLUSIVELY 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations with: (1) expertise in conducting training programs for non-federal employees, and (2) ability to reach a target population of CMV safety enforcement and compliance employees. Government agencies cannot apply directly.
Eligible Uses	Development and delivery of training for non-federal personnel who conduct CMV enforcement activities; training curriculum development; instructor training
mDL Pathway for LE Agencies	Identify an eligible nonprofit training partner early. The nonprofit applies and receives the award; your agency is the training recipient. Suitable partners may include CVSA, IACP, or accredited nonprofit law enforcement training academies.
Website	ai.fmcsa.dot.gov/Grants/HighPriority.aspx

✓ Grant Writing Tip — FMCSA Programs

FMCSA's NOFOs prioritize safety data improvement and new technology demonstrations. For mDL proposals, frame the project around: (1) reducing transcription errors in MCMIS inspection and crash data by using mDL-sourced identity data; (2) automating CDL status verification at point of contact; and (3) linking mDL reader output to existing state CMV information systems. Cite FMCSA's stated goal of 'simplifying enforcement operations by automating data collection, transfer, and display.' Engage your FMCSA Division Office early — they can confirm PP/TLD status and advise on project alignment.

U.S. Department of Transportation — NHTSA Highway Safety Grant Programs

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) administers formula grant programs — primarily Section 402 and Section 405 — that flow through State Highway Safety Offices (SHSOs), typically housed within a state's Governor's Office of Highway Safety or Department of Transportation. These are not competitive grants applied for directly by local agencies; instead, local law enforcement agencies access this funding through sub-award processes administered by the SHSO.

NHTSA Section 402 — State and Community Highway Safety Grant Program

Detail	Information
Administering Agency	NHTSA at federal level; State Highway Safety Offices (SHSOs) / Governors' Highway Safety Offices at state level

Grant Type	Formula (non-competitive; flows through state to local sub-recipients). 80% federal / 20% state match required. At least 40% of funds must be spent by or for the benefit of local governments.
Eligible Uses for mDL	Equipment and technology supporting traffic enforcement; e-citation system integration; crash report quality improvements; officer training on traffic enforcement technology
mDL Nexus	mDL-integrated e-citation systems that auto-populate citation fields reduce officer time and citation errors. mDL-sourced crash report data improves MMUCC compliance and crash data quality.
Access Path	Contact your state Governor's Highway Safety Office or SHSO. Request inclusion of mDL reader technology in the state Highway Safety Plan (HSP) as an eligible sub-recipient project. State HSP applications to NHTSA are due August 1 annually. The Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) maintains a directory of all state SHSOs at ghsa.org .
Website	nhtsa.gov/highway-safety-grants-program

NHTSA Section 405(c) — State Traffic Safety Information System Improvements

Section 405(c) is the most directly applicable NHTSA funding source for agencies seeking to improve crash data quality through mDL integration. This incentive grant program supports state programs that improve the timeliness, accuracy, completeness, uniformity, integration, and accessibility of state safety data. These are precisely the data quality dimensions improved when mDL-sourced identity data auto-populates crash reports, eliminating transcription errors.

Detail	Information
Administering Agency	NHTSA; administered by state SHSOs through state Traffic Records Coordinating Committees (TRCCs)
Grant Type	Incentive formula grant. State must demonstrate quantifiable improvement in traffic records quality. 80/20 federal/state match required.
Eligible Uses for mDL	Equipment to upgrade crash data collection systems; adoption of electronic crash reporting by law enforcement; improving compatibility and interoperability of traffic safety databases; aligning crash data with MMUCC; traffic data quality improvement research and training
mDL Nexus	mDL readers integrated with e-crash report systems directly address 405(c)'s mandate to improve crash data accuracy and timeliness by eliminating manual identity data transcription. Framing mDL integration as a crash data quality improvement positions it squarely within 405(c) eligibility.
Eligibility Requirement	State must have an active TRCC, a designated traffic records coordinator, and a current Traffic Records Strategic Plan. The project must demonstrably advance the plan's goals for one or more of the six data quality attributes.
Access Path	Contact your state TRCC Coordinator (often housed in the state SHSO or DOT). Request inclusion of mDL-integrated crash reporting in the state's annual Traffic Records Strategic Plan project solicitation.
Website	nhtsa.gov/data/traffic-records transportation.gov/government/traffic-records

✓ Grant Writing Tip — NHTSA Section 405(c)

When developing a 405(c) project proposal, ground the application in NHTSA's six crash data quality attributes: timeliness, accuracy, completeness, uniformity, integration, and accessibility. Document current baseline error rates in crash report identity fields (name misspellings, incorrect DL numbers), and propose mDL integration as a technology solution with measurable improvement targets. NHTSA traffic records assessments showing weakness in crash data accuracy are strong supporting justification. Reference the MMUCC 6th Edition (DOT HS 813 525a, 2025) and NHTSA Traffic Records Data Quality Management Guide (DOT HS 813 544, 2024) as the

authoritative design standards.

NHTSA BIL — State Electronic Crash Data Collection Program

Section 24108(d)(2) of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law created a discretionary grant program to support states in upgrading crash data systems for electronic data collection and transfer to NHTSA. Its explicit mandate supports 'adoption of electronic crash reporting by law enforcement agencies' and 'increasing alignment of State crash data with MMUCC' — directly encompassing mDL-integrated crash reporting. Agencies should monitor NHTSA for NOFOs under this program and coordinate with their state SHSO to position mDL integration within state-level applications.

State and Local Funding Sources

Federal formula programs flow through state agencies that in turn sub-award to local law enforcement. Understanding the state-level access points — and building relationships with them — is as important as understanding the federal programs themselves. The specific agency names and contact points will vary by jurisdiction; the categories below reflect the typical structure found across U.S. states and Canadian provinces.

Source	Description and Access Path
State Administering Agency (SAA) — JAG Pass-Through	State SAAs distribute federal JAG formula funds and may operate their own technology grant programs for local law enforcement. Contact your state's designated SAA to identify current solicitation cycles and deadlines. (Example: In many states this is the state attorney general's office, department of public safety, or a state criminal justice agency.)
State SHSO/GHSO — NHTSA Sub-Grants	State highway safety offices sub-award Section 402 and 405(c) funds through annual solicitations. Contact your state SHSO to request inclusion in the next solicitation cycle and ensure your project concept aligns with the state's Highway Safety Plan and Traffic Records Strategic Plan.
State MCSAP Lead Agency	State MCSAP lead agencies (typically the state police or a state DOT enforcement division) may provide equipment, training, or sub-awards to local agencies engaged in CMV enforcement activities. Agencies with active truck enforcement programs should engage their state's MCSAP lead agency.
Asset Forfeiture Funds	Where permitted by state law and agency policy, asset forfeiture proceeds may fund equipment and technology acquisitions. Verify applicable state statutes and agency policy before proceeding.
General Fund Technology Refresh Budgets	The most sustainable long-term approach — incorporate mDL capability into planned equipment refresh cycles funded through normal capital budget processes. Most durable funding path for ongoing sustainment.
State Legislative Appropriations	Direct appropriations through the annual state budget process. Agencies with strong legislative relationships can seek line-item funding for technology modernization. Requires early engagement with legislative staff, typically several months before the legislative session begins. Multi-agency or statewide consortium requests carry more weight.
Regional / Multi-Agency Partnerships	Agencies sharing CAD infrastructure or operating in a regional traffic safety corridor can pool procurement and share integration development costs. Regional consortia also strengthen competitive grant applications — higher per-award impacts score better.

Congressional Appropriations Earmarks

Congressional directed spending (earmarks) represent one of the highest-value and least-utilized funding strategies for law enforcement technology. They are not widely understood by agency grant staff but are actively accessible through the right engagement strategy.

Beyond the COPS TEP program (which is itself funded by earmarks), individual agencies can seek congressional directed spending across multiple appropriations bills. Members of Congress in both the House and Senate can request — and frequently receive — specific allocations for law enforcement technology within their home districts and states.

How Congressional Earmarks Work for LE Technology

- Member Directed Spending requests are submitted annually by Members of Congress (both House and Senate) to their respective Appropriations Committees, typically in January–February for the fiscal year beginning October 1.
- Agencies must provide their congressional representative with a project description, cost estimate, and justification before the request deadline. Your agency's government affairs staff or your congressional delegation office are the starting points.
- For law enforcement technology, the most relevant appropriations bills are Commerce, Justice, Science (CJS — covers DOJ/COPS) and Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD — covers DOT/NHTSA/FMCSA).
- Multi-agency or statewide requests are more competitive. A consortium of agencies sharing mDL reader infrastructure is more compelling to a congressional office than a single-agency request.
- Earmarks require public disclosure — the requesting Member's name, the recipient agency, and the dollar amount are public record.

✓ Strategic Tip — Congressional Engagement

Start conversations with your congressional delegation offices well before the next request deadline. Provide a one-page project summary including: agency name, project description, total cost, and federal amount requested. Reference the growing prevalence of mDL adoption nationally and your state's current or imminent mDL implementation status. Frame the investment as supporting officer safety (reduced time at roadside) and data quality (elimination of transcription errors affecting criminal hit rates). Your state law enforcement association can amplify multi-agency requests.

Cooperative Purchasing Programs

Cooperative purchasing contracts allow agencies to acquire technology without a full competitive procurement. These are particularly useful for accelerating initial deployment while longer-term integrated procurement is planned.

Contract Vehicle	Description	Website
GSA Multiple Award Schedules (MAS)	Federal and eligible state/local agencies. Search Schedule 84 (Law Enforcement, Security, and CBRN Equipment) and Schedule 70 (IT) for identity verification and public safety technology. Most commonly used cooperative contract vehicle.	gsa.gov
NASPO ValuePoint	National cooperative contracts from the National Association of State Procurement Officials; open to state and local agencies in participating states. Check for public safety and technology categories.	naspovaluepoint.org
Sourcewell	Cooperative purchasing for government and education; check for public safety and technology contracts.	sourcewell-mn.gov
State Master Contracts	Most states maintain statewide contracts for law enforcement technology. Contact your state's purchasing or procurement office to identify applicable contracts for reader hardware and software.	Contact state purchasing office

Vendor Financing & OpEx Models

When upfront capital funding is unavailable or grant timelines are too long, OpEx models offered by technology vendors can bridge the gap:

Model	Description
Device-as-a-Service (DaaS)	Monthly per-device fee covering hardware, software, maintenance, and refresh. Converts CapEx to a predictable operating expense. Most useful for agencies with annual operating budget flexibility but no capital budget.
Software-as-a-Service (SaaS)	Monthly per-officer or per-agency subscription for reader software, including updates and support. Allows hardware to be purchased via grant while software is sustained through operating budget.
Bundled Device + Data Plans	Government-rate carrier bundles including device and cellular data at reduced monthly cost. Note: cellular data is not required for mDL verification itself but is needed for CIC/NCIC queries on the same device.
Lease-to-Own	Lease arrangements that transfer ownership at end of term — combining OpEx cash flow with eventual CapEx ownership. Ensures hardware refresh at defined intervals.

Blended Funding Strategy — Practical Model

A practical approach: use JAG or FMCSA HP-CMV grant funds for initial hardware acquisition; use a SaaS subscription for the reader software and ongoing updates; and coordinate with your state SHSO on 405(c) funding for crash-report integration development. This spreads cost across three funding sources aligned to three distinct agency missions — criminal justice, CMV safety, and crash data quality — and reduces dependency on any single grant program or budget cycle.

Grant Writing Tips for mDL Technology

General Tips (All Programs)

- Clearly articulate the operational problem: officers encountering mDLs without tools to read them; manual data entry errors causing missed criminal hits on NCIC queries and lower data quality on reports; re-entry time that reduces patrol capacity.
- Quantify where possible: number of officers receiving readers, estimated time savings per stop, projected reduction in data entry errors. Even rough estimates grounded in documented baselines are valuable.
- Reference AAMVA data on state mDL adoption rates to show the problem is growing — officers will encounter mDLs whether the agency is ready or not. As of early 2026, 21 states plus Puerto Rico have TSA-recognized mDL programs.
- Cite applicable state legislation on mDL acceptance or reader deployment to establish urgency and policy alignment.
- Always include training costs — they are allowable under virtually all programs listed in this document.
- Address Total Cost of Ownership (TCO): include software license renewals, certificate authority subscription fees, personnel training for new hires, and hardware refresh in the grant budget narrative and sustainment plan.
- Consider consortia applications: a multi-agency submission covering a regional corridor or statewide deployment scores higher on impact metrics and broadens congressional/administrative support.

FMCSA-Specific Framing

- Emphasize the CDL/mDL connection: commercial drivers already have mDLs, and inspectors who can verify CDL credentials instantly improve both enforcement efficiency and MCMIS data accuracy.
- Use FMCSA's own HP-ITD language: cite 'simplifying enforcement operations by automating data collection, transfer, and display' as the project goal.
- For HP-CMV: document baseline MCMIS data quality issues attributable to manual transcription of CDL identity data and propose mDL integration as the measured improvement.
- For HP-ETS: identify a 501(c)(3) nonprofit training partner early. The nonprofit must be the applicant; your agency is the training recipient.

NHTSA 405(c) / Traffic Records Framing

- Ground the proposal in NHTSA's six crash data quality attributes: timeliness, accuracy, completeness, uniformity, integration, and accessibility.
- Document current error rates in crash report identity fields (name errors, incorrect DL numbers) as baseline metrics to improve.
- Reference MMUCC 6th Edition data element requirements and show how mDL-sourced data achieves higher MMUCC compliance than manual entry.
- Engage your state TRCC Coordinator early — 405(c) projects must appear in the state Traffic Records Strategic Plan before they can be funded.

Grant Program Sequencing Strategy

Sophisticated agencies pursue a deliberate sequencing strategy rather than applying to programs opportunistically:

- **Phase 1 — Pilot (Year 1):** Apply for a NIJ demonstration grant or use JAG funds for a limited pilot deployment. Document baseline metrics (stop time, error rates, officer feedback) rigorously.
- **Phase 2 — Scale (Years 1–2):** Use pilot performance data to support competitive grant applications (HP-CMV, BWC Implementation). Stronger data = stronger narrative = higher scores.
- **Phase 3 — Sustain:** Incorporate the technology into annual JAG formula requests and NHTSA sub-grant cycles. Transition software costs to SaaS/operating budget. Engage legislature for ongoing capital refresh.

Funding Program Quick Reference

Program	Agency	Best mDL Use Case	Type	Local Access Path
JAG (Edward Byrne)	DOJ/BJA	General LE reader hardware & software; training	Formula + Competitive	Via state SAA
COPS TEP	DOJ/COPS	LE technology & equipment	Invitational Only — JES earmark	Must be named in Congressional JES — engage your delegation
CPD Microgrants	DOJ/COPS	Community policing technology innovation	Competitive	Direct application (justgrants.usdoj.gov)
BWC Policy & Implementation	DOJ/BJA	mDL as digital evidence management	Competitive	Direct application (justgrants.usdoj.gov)
NIJ Demonstration	DOJ/NIJ	mDL pilot site & evaluation	Competitive	Direct application (nij.ojp.gov)
FEMA HSGP / UASI	DHS/FEMA	Interoperability & identity auth framing	Formula (sub-award)	Via state SAA / state homeland security office
SLCGP	DHS/CISA	PKI / CJIS-compliant software infrastructure	Formula (sub-award)	Via state cybersecurity office

MCSAP	USDOT/FMCSA	CMV inspection technology & enforcement	Formula (sub-award)	Via state MCSAP lead agency
HP-ITD	USDOT/FMCSA	CMV enforcement tech & MCMIS/SAFER data links	Competitive	States only (requires PP/TLD)
HP-CMV	USDOT/FMCSA	New CMV technology demos, safety data improvement	Competitive	Direct (states, local govts, nonprofits)
HP-ETS	USDOT/FMCSA	CMV enforcement officer training	Competitive — nonprofits ONLY	Partner with 501(c)(3) nonprofit applicant
NHTSA Section 402	USDOT/NHTSA	e-Citation & traffic enforcement technology	Formula (sub-award)	Via state SHSO/GHSO
NHTSA Section 405(c)	USDOT/NHTSA	Crash data quality & electronic crash reporting	Incentive formula (sub-award)	Via state TRCC / SHSO
BIL State Electronic Data	USDOT/NHTSA	State crash data system modernization	Discretionary	Via state SHSO
Congressional Earmarks	Congress / DOJ or DOT	Large-scale or statewide mDL technology deployments	Member-directed spending	Engage House & Senate offices (Jan–Feb deadline)

Acronym Glossary

Acronym	Definition
AAMVA	American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators
BJA	Bureau of Justice Assistance (U.S. DOJ)
BIL	Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, P.L. 117-58)
BLE	Bluetooth Low Energy
BWC	Body-Worn Camera
BWCPIP	Body-Worn Camera Policy and Implementation Program (BJA)
CAD	Computer-Aided Dispatch
CapEx	Capital Expenditure
CDL	Commercial Driver's License
CJIS	Criminal Justice Information Services (FBI)
CJS	Commerce, Justice, Science (Congressional appropriations bill)
CMV	Commercial Motor Vehicle
COPS	Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (U.S. DOJ)
CPD	Community Policing Development
CVSA	Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance
CVSP	Commercial Vehicle Safety Plan

DaaS	Device-as-a-Service
DHS	U.S. Department of Homeland Security
DOJ	U.S. Department of Justice
DOT	Department of Transportation (U.S. or state level)
DTS	AAMVA Digital Trust Service
FBR	Field-Based Reporting
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FIPS	Federal Information Processing Standards
FMCSA	Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration
GHSO	Governor's Highway Safety Office
HP-CMV	High Priority — Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Grant (FMCSA)
HP-ETS	High Priority — Enforcement Training and Support Grant (FMCSA)
HP-ITD	High Priority — Innovative Technology Deployment Grant (FMCSA)
HSP	Highway Safety Plan
HSGP	Homeland Security Grant Program (FEMA)
IACP	International Association of Chiefs of Police
ISA	Information Security Agreement (CJIS context)
JAG	Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant
JES	Joint Explanatory Statement (Congressional appropriations)
LETPA	Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Activities
MCMIS	Motor Carrier Management Information System (FMCSA)
MCSAP	Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program
mDL	Mobile Driver License
MMUCC	Model Minimum Uniform Crash Criteria
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCIC	National Crime Information Center
NFC	Near-Field Communication
NHTSA	National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
NIJ	National Institute of Justice
NOFO	Notice of Funding Opportunity
OpEx	Operating Expenditure
PKI	Public Key Infrastructure
PP/TLDD	Program Plan / Top Level Design (FMCSA HP-ITD eligibility requirement)
RMS	Records Management System
SAA	State Administering Agency
SAFER	Safety and Fitness Electronic Records (FMCSA)
SaaS	Software-as-a-Service

SHSP	State Homeland Security Program
SHSO	State Highway Safety Office
SLCGP	State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program
TCO	Total Cost of Ownership
TEP	Technology and Equipment Program (COPS Office)
THUD	Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (Congressional appropriations bill)
TRCC	Traffic Records Coordinating Committee
UASI	Urban Area Security Initiative
USDOT	U.S. Department of Transportation

Related Toolkit Documents

Document	Content
DOC-01	Standards Overview — ISO/IEC 18013-5 & 18013-7, AAMVA guidelines, national mDL landscape
DOC-02	Hardware & Software Requirements — cost components to budget in grant applications; CJIS compliance baseline
DOC-04	Operational Workflows — use case documentation to support grant narratives and needs assessments
DOC-05	Procurement Considerations & Strategy — solicitation requirements and contract framework
DOC-07	Legal & Privacy Considerations — state law, data retention, CJIS, and Fourth Amendment

This document is a component of the AAMVA Law Enforcement mDL Toolkit. For questions or corrections, contact AAMVA at aamva.org.