

STATE OF FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
HIGHWAY SAFETY CONCEPT PAPER
Concept Paper Summary

Applicant Information

Applicant Agency:	Miami-Dade Police Department
Implementing Agency:	Miami-Dade Police Department
Concept Paper Title:	Miami-Dade Distracted Driving Program
Priority Area for Concept Paper:	Distracted Driving
Amount Requested:	

Type of Project:	Local
Type of Request:	Continuation - 2
Previous Year's Project Number (if Continuation):	

Head of Agency

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Statement of the Problem:

Distracted driving is one of the fastest growing traffic safety issues nationwide. Each day in the United States, approximately 9 people are killed and more than 1,000 are injured in crashes that are reported to involve a distracted driver (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2017). Nationally, nine percent of all fatal motor vehicle crashes involved distraction (National Center for Statistics and Analysis [NCSA], 2019).

Distracted driving occurs when drivers divert their attention away from driving to focus on some other activity. While distracted driving discussions often focus on cell phone use or texting while driving, other activities such as eating, talking to other passengers, or adjusting settings on the radio can also be distractions. There are three main types of distraction: visual: taking your eyes off the road; manual: taking your hands off the wheel; and cognitive: taking your mind off of driving (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration [NHTSA], 2017).

Miami-Dade County is the southeastern most county on the United States mainland. According to a 2019 census report, the county had a population of 2,716,940, making it the most populous county in Florida and the seventh-most populous county in the United States. It is also Florida's third largest county in terms of land area, with 1,946 square miles.

In 2019, there were 10,450 distracted driving-related crashes in the county. Of these crashes, 124 resulted in serious injuries and/or fatalities. According to the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) fiscal year (FY) 2021 Highway Safety Matrix, the Miami-Dade County ranked in the highest areas for distracted driving-related serious injuries and fatalities out of 25 counties with populations of 200,001 and above.

With distracted driving crashes continuing to increase throughout the U.S. and in Florida, it is clear that there is a need for increased distracted driving education and enforcement to save lives and improve safety of the county's roadways.

Supporting Data:

2018 – 14 Serious Injuries plus 2 Fatalities

2019 – 18 Serious Injuries plus 3 Fatalities

2020 – 12 Serious Injuries plus 6 Fatalities

Proposed Solution:

The Miami-Dade Distracted Driving Program aims to reduce distracted driving-related fatalities and serious injuries by implementing data-driven overtime enforcement operations within Miami-Dade County. A data-driven approach will be used for analysis of traffic crash locations with a high -frequency of distracted driving-related crashes and/or serious injuries and fatalities. Additional variables will also be considered, such as knowledge of the area and prior experience with the community. The primary focus for enforcement operations will be to identify distracted drivers and to enforce traffic laws while educating motorists of the dangers associated with distracted driving. At the conclusion of each overtime enforcement operation, an after-action evaluation will be conducted. Based on the evaluation results, operations may be modified to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of future operations. The number of overtime operations, hours, time of day, officers, type of countermeasures, and other factors will vary, depending on the after-action knowledge, goals of the respective operation, and other data as appropriate.

Communications and outreach efforts will accompany enforcement details in order to reinforce the distracted driving safety message. Education and outreach will be conducted at local community events to provide distracted driving information and educational materials to the public. Local media and social media will be utilized throughout the project period to promote distracted driving-related information to the public.

Sustainability:

MDPD has consistently demonstrated its strong commitment to enforcement operations as well as educational initiatives targeting highway traffic safety.

These grant funds will provide the resources to conduct additional operations that would not be possible using only MDPD resources. The grant enhances capacity with additional high-visibility enforcement operations and educational initiatives which result from these kinds of operations.

Project Objectives:

- a. Strive to decrease distracted driving-related injuries and fatalities in Miami-Dade County by 3% when compared to the previous three-year average.
- b. Conduct a minimum of 75 distracted driving high visibility overtime enforcement operations during the project period.
- c. Participate in National Distracted Driving Awareness month through distracted driving overtime enforcement operations and/or educational/community activities.
- d. Conduct and/or participate in 30 educational/community outreach events to increase distracted driving awareness during the project period.
- e. Provide distracted driving information and education to the public through the use of social media/press releases at least 105 times during the project period.

Evaluation:

- a. Distracted driving-related injuries and fatalities are reduced by 3% countywide, compared to the previous three-year average.
- b. The number of distracted driving high visibility overtime enforcement operations conducted during the project period.
- c. The number of distracted driving-related overtime enforcement operations conducted and/or education/community activities conducted/participated in during National Distracted Driving Awareness Month.
- d. The number of educational/community outreach events conducted or participated in to increase distracted driving awareness [during the project period].
- e. The number of instances that distracted driving information and education is provided to the public through the use of social media/press releases during the project period.