

2013 State Damage Prevention Program Grants Final Report
CFDA Number: 20.720

Award Number: DTPH56-13-G-PHPS20

Project Title: Ohio Utilities Protection Service State Damage Prevention Grant

Date Submitted: September 18, 2014

Submitted by: Alice Miller

Specific Objective(s) of the Agreement

Under this grant agreement, O.U.P.S. will:

- Develop and implement methods for effective communication
- Foster support and partnership with stakeholders
- Support Public Awareness and Stakeholder Education
- Laws and regulations of the damage prevention process
- Review the effectiveness of Damage Prevention Programs

Workscope

- *Element 1 (Effective Communications):* Participation by operators, excavators, and other stakeholders in the development and implementation of methods for establishing and maintaining effective communications between stakeholders from receipt of an excavation notification until successful completion of the excavation, as appropriate.
- *Element 2 (Comprehensive Stakeholder Support):* A process for fostering and ensuring the support and partnership of stakeholders, including excavators, operators, locators, designers, and local government in all phases of the program.
- *Element 5 (Public Education):* A process for fostering and ensuring active participation by all stakeholders in public education for damage prevention activities.
- *Element 7 (Enforcement):* Enforcement of State damage prevention laws and regulations for all aspects of the damage prevention process, including public education, and the use of civil penalties for violations assessable by the appropriate State authority.
- *Element 9 (Damage Prevention Program Review):* A process for review and analysis of the effectiveness of each program element, including a means for implementing improvements identified by such program reviews.

Accomplishments for this period (Item 1 under Article IX, Section 9.02 Final Report: “A comparison of actual accomplishments to the objectives established for the period.”)

- *Element 1 (Effective Communications):* Communication among stakeholders will be positively impacted by the information gained through this research campaign and the subsequent educational pieces that will be developed.
- *Element 2 (Comprehensive Stakeholder Support):* The research campaign targeted the facility owner/excavation industry at large in an effort to determine why stakeholders do not report damages and/or near misses by way of the Damage Information Reporting Tool (DIRT) or Virtual Private DIRT (VPD).
- *Element 5 (Public Education):* The information that we have gathered from stakeholders will impact the design of the subsequent educational piece.
- *Element 7 (Enforcement):* It is our goal that this reporting and data collection project will encourage Ohio stakeholders to submit damage/near-miss data. It will also educate

legislators about the need for this data. Once collected, we will be able to analyze the data and determine root-cause analysis as it relates to: Municipal exemptions under Ohio law, the lack of enforcement under Ohio law, and the impact of the existence of Limited Basis Participants (LBPs) under Ohio law, among many other safety factors.

- *Element 9 (Damage Prevention Program Review)*: The collection of this data from stakeholders has enabled O.U.P.S., and others involved in damage prevention, to measure the effectiveness of the State Damage Prevention Program. Additionally, it has enabled us to measure the impact of our current (one call) law as it relates to the protection of underground facilities, and the safety of its workers and general public.

Summary of Research findings were submitted in the Progress Report (for that period):

Conclusions of Research:

- Awareness of O.U.P.S., “8-1-1” and the connection between the two is very high across all groups surveyed.
- While the majority (68%) say they have a process in place to investigate and make reports, there is still room for improvement, especially among engineers.
- Reporting to a state/national system is quite low (~30%) and around three-quarters of those surveyed say they are not aware of a damage reporting system.
- Respondents have high agreement with the benefits of damage reporting especially “Reduce damages for your company/state/industry”.
- Legal requirements for reporting in other states clearly improve compliance.

Work completed in the final phase of the project consisted of developing educational pieces, specifically two tri-fold brochures, which will be distributed to the excavation industry at large and to legislators. The text and artwork used in these educational pieces were based upon the research findings and explain the importance of submitting data into the national DIRT program or O.U.P.S.’ VPD program.

The 3,000 brochures created for the excavation industry will be distributed (primarily) by O.U.P.S. staff during safety presentations and Damage Prevention Council Meetings. Most of the 500 brochures created for Ohio’s legislators will be distributed by mail to not only legislators but to other decision makers as well, such as mayors, county commissioners – those who can directly impact Ohio’s legislation. Additionally, research findings are posted on O.U.P.S.’ website in order to further educate stakeholders about the need to increase damage/near miss information.

Our research indicates that the majority of stakeholders are unaware of a local or national reporting system. The educational pieces created will not only make them aware of the reporting systems available, but will show them where to access these systems, and provides examples of valuable information that can be extracted from the data collected.

A seeming slight increase in reporting from Ohio stakeholders during the last quarter of 2014 and during 2015 will be deemed a success due to the fact that so few stakeholders input data today. Previous efforts have been made to educate and motivate industry stakeholders about data collection with little success. However, we are hopeful that educating stakeholders while prompting legislators and industry leaders to opt for change may make a difference.

Elements 1 (*Effective Communications*), 2 (*Comprehensive Stakeholder Support*), and 5 (*Public Education*) have been successfully addressed within this project as outlined above. Elements 7

(*Enforcement*) as outlined above is ongoing as a change in legislation can be measured only at a later date. Element 9 (*Damage Prevention Program Review*) was a large part of the research phase of this project (results were outlined in the progress report).

Issues, Problems or Challenges (Item 3 under Article IX, Section 9.01 Project Report: “The reasons for slippage if established objectives were not met. “)

There are no issues problems or challenges to report.

Final Financial Status Report

Final Financial Status Report submitted per agreement.

The Ohio Utilities Protection Services wishes to thank the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration for its support. Your assistance enables us to further our damage prevention efforts in Ohio. Our ongoing goal is to educate Ohioans about safety practices that protect its infrastructure, its environment, and most importantly its citizens.