

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
Funding Opportunity Number: DHS-USCG-2020-001
Type of Funding: Cooperative Agreement
CFDA Numbers: 97.012
CFDA Descriptions: Boating Safety Financial Assistance

Grantee: National Safe Boating Council (NSBC)
Grant Number: 3320FAN112016
Grant Title: Boat on Course
Period of Performance: 1 year grant

Award Amount: \$70,000.00

Summary:

The National Safe Boating Council (NSBC) will update and enhance BoatOnCourse.com, an educational website with free boating training videos for the public. Geared toward powerboaters, Boat On Course takes a practical approach to boating by equating it to the “rules of the road” when driving a car, with helpful training videos about responsible powerboat operation, navigation lights, sound signals, overtaking, crossing, and other basic navigational rules. Each video is followed by a quiz to give the learner immediate feedback. A new video series will be created and designed specifically for paddling participants. With 22.9 million Americans participating in paddling activities each year, an online learning experience is an opportunity to provide training and to support a safe, enjoyable experience for paddlers.

The NSBC online learning video series on BoatOnCourse.com will continue to have a positive impact on boater behavior with the addition of a new video series targeting paddlesports (i.e. canoe, kayak, SUP). The Safety Videos page will be updated to allow site visitors to select a category of videos specific to their boating modality (e.g. powerboater, paddler, or sailor) to enhance the user experience and to ensure specificity in the training topics. Marketing efforts will build awareness of BoatOnCourse.com and increase website views and quiz participation.

<https://www.safeboatingcouncil.org/>

<https://boatoncourse.com/>



National Safe Boating Council

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October 18, 2021

U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters
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For the year 2020-2021, the U.S. Coast Guard granted the National Safe Boating Council \$70,000 for Boat On Course, Agreement No. 3320FAN1120.16. This letter, together with the enclosed Executive Summary, Program Activities, and Program Evaluation, is our final report.

Sincerely,

/Peg Phillips/
Executive Director
National Safe Boating Council

Enclosures: Executive Summary, Program Activities, Program Evaluation



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There are no white lines, street signs, or stop lights while boating. It can be more challenging than driving a car, but there still are “rules of the road.” The U.S. Coast Guard awarded the National Safe Boating Council (NSBC) a grant for Boat On Course, Agreement No. 3320FAN1120.16, which takes a practical approach to boating by equating it to the “rules of the road” when driving a car. Boaters can visit www.BoatOnCourse.com to watch helpful training videos about responsible boat operation, learn basic navigation rules, and take a quiz following each video to get immediate feedback.

The NSBC developed four new videos for BoatOnCourse.com specifically for paddling participants. With 22.9 million Americans participating in paddling activities each year, an online learning experience is an opportunity to provide training to support a safe, enjoyable experience for paddlers. The videos explore the following areas of risk for recreational paddlers, including: 1) sharing the waterways, 2) boater etiquette at launch areas, 3) how to navigate channels, and 4) safety gear for paddlers.

Enhancements were made to BoatOnCourse.com so a visitor can filter and watch videos by modality. For example, if a boater only wants to watch videos related to paddling, they will filter by “Paddlecraft” to find the new paddling videos. The NSBC managed the learning management system, including new quizzes for the four videos, and made other updates to the site to improve the user experience.

Social media and digital marketing efforts focused on building awareness of BoatOnCourse.com by increasing video views and driving quiz participation. Images, gifs, and factoids were developed to share on social media sites as boosted content. In addition, the NSBC collaborated with members and other partners to increase visitors at BoatOnCourse.com. In total, 13,000 people visited the website over the last year and 3,500 people completed a quiz – a conversion rate of 26.92%. (An industry standard conversion rate is between 2-5 percent.)

BoatOnCourse.com continues to reach boaters with accessible and easy-to-understand information about navigation rules. Learn more at www.BoatOnCourse.com.



PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

The following is a summary of program activities. Resources and additional information are available at www.BoatOnCourse.com.

- 1) *New content:* The NSBC developed four videos and quizzes specifically for paddling participants. Each video is approximately 3-4 minutes long and explores the following areas of risk for recreational paddlers, including: 1) sharing the waterways, 2) boater etiquette at launch areas, 3) how to navigate channels, and 4) safety gear for paddlers. Production took place in Virginia Beach, VA, in partnership with the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources, capturing video and still photography.
- 2) *Website:* Enhancements were made to BoatOnCourse.com so a visitor can filter and watch videos by modality. For example, if a boater only wants to watch videos related to paddling, they can filter by “Paddlecraft” to find the new paddling videos. The NSBC managed the learning management system, including new quizzes for the four videos and made other updates to the site to improve the user experience. Each quiz has approximately 5-8 questions. The learning management system allows the NSBC to see which videos/quizzes have been completed, and how the individual scored.
- 3) *Social media and digital marketing:* With the majority of Americans receiving their news and communications through social media, a social media marketing effort reached boaters with Boat On Course content. Images, gifs, and factoids were shared as boosted content on social media sites.
- 4) *Partner support:* Collaboration was key in promoting BoatOnCourse.com as the online training destination for the rules of navigation. The NSBC shared about Boat On Course with members and partners in newsletters, social media, and one-on-one outreach. Kalkomey has agreed to put the link to www.BoatOnCourse.com on their educational websites within the coming months.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

The following are program metrics as of October 5, 2021:

- 1) *Digital analytics:* There were 13,000 visitors to www.BoatOnCourse.com from October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021, and more than 3,500 people completed a quiz – a conversion rate of 26.92%. The average quiz score was 90%. Please note, an industry standard conversion rate is between 2-5 percent. On social media, the Boat On Course posts had a lifetime reach of more than 156,000 users. The new videos are ranked below by popularity: 1) Boater Etiquette at Launch Areas, 2) Sharing the Waterways, 3) Safety Equipment for Paddlers, and 4) How to Navigate Channels as a Paddler. Please note, boaters could watch a video and not complete a quiz if viewing only the video on social media.



- 2) *Stakeholder feedback:* NSBC partners shared that the enhancements to Boat On Course make the program appeal to more boaters, by representing more modalities and by filming in multiple locations showing a variety in the environment and landscape. NSBC's instructor network encourages boaters who complete an on-water course to continue their education by watching the free content at www.BoatOnCourse.com.