

## **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: 3320FAN112018  
Grant Title: Safe Boating Campaign  
Period of Performance: 1 year grant

Award Amount: \$300,000.00

### **Summary:**

The National Safe Boating Council (NSBC) proposes an integrated communications campaign for the popular Safe Boating Campaign, a national outreach and education awareness effort to influence the public to always wear a life jacket while boating and to adopt safe boating behaviors. Efforts will focus on driving social change specifically towards making life jacket wear a routine behavior by focusing on the “boater gear mentality” of high-risk recreational boaters (i.e. users of small [21-feet and less] open powerboats, paddlers, hunters and anglers). The Safe Boating Campaign will drive this effort by making “gear” a routine part of an adventurous boating lifestyle, with the goal to make responsible boating practices as routine as wearing a seat belt while driving in a car or wearing a helmet while riding a bike.

Research shows that people instinctively choose to do what is fun, easy and popular. The Safe Boating Campaign will build on campaign messaging around the theme “Wear It” showing boating is fun while reinforcing the “gear mentality.” For example, you wouldn’t go skiing, without your helmet. Program activities and deliverables will focus on integrated communications efforts that will bring a fundamental change in people’s belief toward boating safety, and will include social change marketing, influencer strategies, partner support, campaign resources/PSAs, grassroots outreach, public relations, social media campaigns, research and additional efforts to reach the boating public. Marketing materials will be scalable for recreational boating safety partners to implement and to extend the reach of the campaign. It’s important to realize that long-term change takes time, so the NSBC has identified quantitative and qualitative evaluation metrics to inform program development and success.

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



**National Safe Boating Council**

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October 28, 2021

Boating Safety Division  
U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters  
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Washington, D.C. 20032

For the year 2020-2021, the U.S. Coast Guard granted the National Safe Boating Council \$300,000 for the Safe Boating Campaign 3320FAN1120.18. This letter, together with the enclosed Executive Summary and Program Evaluation, is our final report.

Sincerely,

/Peg Phillips/  
Executive Director  
National Safe Boating Council



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The U.S. Coast Guard awarded the National Safe Boating Council a grant for the Safe Boating Campaign, Agreement No. 3320FAN1120.18, for a national outreach and education awareness effort to influence the public to always wear a life jacket while boating and to adopt safe boating behaviors. The campaign continued to build on the theme, “Wear It,” leveraging social change marketing, partner support, campaign resources, public outreach, marketing, public relations, and research in program activities. All efforts focused on building a gear mentality and making wearing a life jacket, and using other boating gear, a routine part of an adventurous boating lifestyle.

Social change activities included the development of a new PSA series including a variety of animated and live action videos (4), radio ads (2), and social media elements (15) to effectively reach different boating groups. For example, the NSBC partnered with iHeart Media, Latitude 38, and other digital advertising efforts to bring these messages directly to over half a million boaters.

The Safe Boating Campaign was supported by a network of over 300 partners from around the world, each with their own distinct reach and sphere of influence. For example, campaign partner Twiggy the Water Skiing Squirrel educated more than 50,000 people at in-person events on the importance of wearing a life jacket. Additionally, hundreds of organizational partners shared campaign resources, launch signs, and social media posts at conferences and community outreach opportunities.

At its core, the Safe Boating Campaign is a grassroots effort that partners rely on for boating safety resources. These resources included: co-branded logos; resource kit with template materials, talking points, fact sheets, press releases, media alerts, media best practices, and social media toolkit; print, video, and social PSAs; social media images; banners and other signage (while supplies lasted); and giveaway items such as brochures, stickers, wristbands, dry bags, and more (while supplies lasted). The NSBC distributed 144,000 free resources in their distribution drive.

National Safe Boating Week and Wear Your Life Jacket at Work Day were the foundation for public outreach events around the world. More than 15,500 people participated in these events using resources from the Safe Boating Campaign.

Marketing activities included a robust campaign on Google AdWords, social media, iHeart Media, and Latitude 38. Efforts focused on reaching new boaters with boating safety messages. PR efforts focused on National Safe Boating Week, Fourth of July, and Labor Day. This included a Presidential Proclamation in coordination with the U.S. Coast Guard Office of Boating Safety in recognition of National Safe Boating Week.

With more boaters on the water than ever before, the Safe Boating Campaign reached thousands of boaters around the world with boating safety messages, specifically encouraging them to wear a life jacket and boat responsibly.



## PROGRAM EVALUATION

Following are program metrics as of October 1, 2021. All resources are available at [www.SafeBoatingCampaign.com](http://www.SafeBoatingCampaign.com).

- 1) **Research:** The annual awareness survey found that the Safe Boating Campaign continues to gain awareness with just over three-quarters (77%) of the 2021 participants recognizing the Safe Boating Campaign. 57% of participants individuate that they wear a life jacket “always or most of the time,” with barriers being there are no laws requiring wear, uncomfortable jackets, forgetting or not thinking about wearing one, and/or simply not wanting to wear one. COVID-19 has impacted the frequency of boating with 36% of participants saying they will go more often and only 10% saying they will go less often this year.

In addition, the NSBC led a Tiger Team of state agency representatives to learn more about their outreach needs. An informal focus group and digital survey identified the top 3 educational needs for the states, including social media content, giveaway items, and boating safety classes (online and in-person). However, the states cited staffing and budget as limiting these efforts.

- 2) **Campaign resources:** The Safe Boating Campaign provides a library of downloadable and printed resources for partners. All resources are available on the campaign website. Following is a snapshot of the printed items distributed:

- Brochure Box Sets: 410 boxes shipped (each box included 225 brochures)
- Safe Boating Campaign Box Sets: 100 boxes shipped (each box included 100 items valued at over \$100)
- Remember to Wear It Launch Signs: 2,000 signs
- Carbon Monoxide Warning Launch Signs: 2,000 signs
- Other items (banners, DVDs, and flyers): 35,000 items

- 3) **Digital analytics:** These analytics reflect various marketing activities to drive boaters to [www.SafeBoatingCampaign.com](http://www.SafeBoatingCampaign.com).

- Google AdWords: 62,655 impressions resulting in 2,036 unique clicks with an average click-through rate of 3.1% (industry average)
- Google Analytics: 47,000 unique visitors
- iHeart Media: 4,989,600 listeners
- Latitude 38: 3-month partnership resulted in 2,934 unique episode downloads
- Newsletters: 14 HTML newsletters with resources and other information from the campaign were distributed to over 3,500 people
- Blog posts: 44 blog posts with updates and information from the campaign
- Social media: 55,000 unique engagements across Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, with the most popular content being fun memes, life jacket tips, and reminders to take a boating safety course.



- 4) **Partnerships:** There were 485 registered campaign partners, and over 50 co-branded logos were created. The campaign continued its 21-year partnership with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Weather Service in sharing boating safety messages throughout National Safe Boating Week. Additional noteworthy partnerships include Twiggy the Water Skiing Squirrel educating more than 50,000 people at in-person events on the importance of wearing a life jacket; pro-angler Hunter Bland added the Safe Boating Campaign logo to his truck, professional fishing boat, jersey, and personally shared why he supports the campaign at 10 events; Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission shared about the Safe Boating Campaign in their spring and summer advertising campaigns; and Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources assisted with a photoshoot.
- 5) **Grassroots events:** The Safe Boating Campaign is supported by a grassroots network of more than 3,500 people representing state agencies, nonprofits, boat clubs, parks, and more. The NSBC provided resources and more to support two grassroots events: National Safe Boating Week (May 22-28, 2021) and Wear Your Life Jacket at Work Day (May 21, 2021). 8,815 unique visitors accessed resources for these events, 485 people signed up as official campaign partners, and more than 13,000 people participated in Wear Your Life Jacket at Work Day (trackable on social media).
- 6) **Public relations:** Earned media relations efforts resulted in nearly 1.7 billion impressions with an ad equivalency value of \$1.8 million (trackable via automated service). This does not include all radio and local coverage across the country due to budget limitations for monitoring services. This included six press releases on the national newswire and thousands of placements in local markets including letters to the editor, local coverage, and more using the resources from the Safe Boating Campaign. President Biden issued a proclamation in support of National Safe Boating Week using the template information provided by the National Safe Boating Council.