Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
For Grant Electronic Management System
(GEMS)

General Questions:

Q: How do I add my Agency and/or Department to GEMS?
A: Agency and Department can be added by the completing the online registration form at: https://www.ots.ca.gov/grants/gems/.

Q: How do I add new users or contacts to an existing GEMS account?
A: Users/contacts can only be added by contacting your OTS Grant Coordinator.

Q: How do I change my password?
A: On the log-in screen, enter your username and click "Forgot Password." An automated password reset email will then be sent to the email address on your GEMS account. Note, depending on the IT security measures in place at your organization, sometimes the password reset email will not get delivered. If you do not receive the password reset email within 30 minutes, please email otsgemsadmin@ots.ca.gov for further assistance.

Q: How do I save my information as I navigate the application (without exiting)?
A: Click on the "Check for Errors" button and/or click the "Next" button and it will AutoSave.

Q: How do I find my SAM number?
A: Contact your Finance Department. The SAM number is used to track federal funding to public entities.

Q: Where can I find my SAM number Expiration Date?
A: www.SAM.gov

Application Information Section:

Q: Can I skip ahead to other sections of the application?
A: Yes, but only after selecting the "Application Type" in the "Application".

Q: Who should we designate as the Authorized Representative? Do they need to be one of the signers if we are awarded a grant?
A: The Authorized Representative should be someone with authority to apply for grant funding. This person does not necessarily need to be a signer of the final grant documents.

Application Summary Section and Proposed Solution Section:

Q: Why won't the system accept information typed or pasted into a text box?
A: You may have exceeded the 35,000 character limit of the text box. Photographs and graphics consume a large amount of the character limit.

Q: If I exceed the 35,000 character limit and I need to provide additional information, what do I do?
A: Type "See Attached" in the text box and use the "Upload Documents" section in the navigation column to upload a document with additional information. Be sure to reference the appropriate application section in the title of the document.

Q: Can I cut and paste from a Word document into the text boxes?
A: Yes, this is possible but not recommended. The formatting in the Word document carries over when you copy and paste into GEMS. If you wish to copy and paste please be sure to remove all formatting before pasting by selecting the desired section, right click and 'paste as plain text'.

Q: Can I edit the font and font size within the text boxes?
A: No. If you have two different fonts or sizes of text, it likely resulted from cutting and pasting into the system and then typed additional information. To correct this, you will need to copy all the text into a Word document, make the edits and then 'paste as plain text' back into GEMS.

Goals Section:

Q: What do I need to do in the Goals section?
A: For templated grants, you do not need to add anything. For General grants, insert the intended outcomes intended to be achieved by the grant activities, for example, "Reduce alcohol related fatalities."

Objectives Section:

Q: Why were the changes to Target Numbers not saved?
A: If you clicked the "Edit All" button you must click the "Save All" button. You may need to scroll back to the top of the page to see the "Save All" button. Do not click the "Save and Exit" button.

Budget Section:

Q: Why were the changes to my budget line items not saved?
A: If you clicked the "Edit All" button you must click the "Save All" button. You may need to scroll back to the top of the page to see the "Save All" button. Do not click the "Save and Exit" button.

Q: How do I add benefits to a Position?
A: Click "+New" to create a new line. Select "Personnel Costs" for Category. In the "Item Name" field, enter "Benefits - (position name)." Select the Pay Type and Position Type. Enter "1" for Units. Enter the total funded cost of the position in the "Unit Cost or Rate" field. Enter 100% in the "Percent Paid" field. Enter the total percentage of benefits in the "Benefit Rate" field. In the "Narrative" field, input, for example, "Benefits- (Position Name) @75%."

Q: How do I to add benefits to Overtime activities?
A: Click "+New" to create a new line. Select "Personnel Costs" for Category. In the "Enforcement Activity" field select "other." In "Unit Costs" field enter the total dollar amount of all overtime enforcement activities. Enter "1" for Units. In "Item Name" enter "Benefits-OT @ (%)." Enter the total percentage of benefits in the "Benefit Rate" field. In the "Narrative" field, input, for example, "Benefits-Overtime @ (%)."

Q: If I select a Standard Language Item from the dropdown box, do I need to include an "Item Name" and "Narrative"?
A: No, it will populate after you "Save".