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§ 20501. National coordination of AMBER Alert communications network

(a) Coordination within Department of Justice

The Attorney General shall assign an officer of the Department of Justice to act as the national coordinator of the AMBER Alert communications network regarding abducted children. The officer so designated shall be known as the AMBER Alert Coordinator of the Department of Justice.

(b) Duties

In acting as the national coordinator of the AMBER Alert communications network, the Coordinator shall—

- (1) seek to eliminate gaps in the network, including gaps in areas of interstate travel (including airports, maritime ports, border crossing areas and checkpoints, and ports of exit from the United States);
- (2) work with States, territories of the United States, and tribal governments to encourage the development of additional elements (known as local AMBER plans) in the network;
- (3) work with States, territories of the United States, and tribal governments to ensure appropriate regional coordination of various elements of the network; and
- (4) act as the nationwide point of contact for—

- (A) the development of the network; and
- (B) regional coordination of alerts on abducted children through the network.

(c) Consultation with Federal Bureau of Investigation

In carrying out duties under subsection (b), the Coordinator shall notify and consult with the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation concerning each child abduction for which an alert is issued through the AMBER Alert communications network.

(d) Cooperation

The Coordinator shall cooperate with the Secretary of Transportation, the Secretary of Homeland Security, and the Federal Communications Commission in carrying out activities under this section.

(e) Report

Not later than March 1, 2005, the Coordinator shall submit to Congress a report on the activities of the Coordinator and the effectiveness and status of the AMBER plans of each State that has implemented such a plan. The Coordinator shall prepare the report in consultation with the Secretary of Transportation.

(Pub. L. 108–21, title III, §301, Apr. 30, 2003, 117 Stat. 660; Pub. L. 116–283, div. H, title C, §10001(a)(1), Jan. 1, 2021, 134 Stat. 4860.)

Editorial Notes

CODIFICATION

Section was formerly classified to section 5791 of Title 42, The Public Health and Welfare, prior to editorial reclassification and renumbering as this section.

AMENDMENTS

2021—Subsec. (b)(1). Pub. L. 116–283, §10001(a)(1)(A)(i), inserted “(including airports, maritime ports, border crossing areas and checkpoints, and ports of exit from the United States)” after “gaps in areas of interstate travel”.

Subsec. (b)(2), (3). Pub. L. 116–283, §10001(a)(1)(A)(ii), inserted “, territories of the United States, and tribal governments” after “States”.

Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 116–283, §10001(a)(1)(B), inserted “, the Secretary of Homeland Security,” after “Secretary of Transportation”.

§ 20502. Minimum standards for issuance and dissemination of alerts through AMBER Alert communications network

(a) Establishment of minimum standards

Subject to subsection (b), the AMBER Alert Coordinator of the Department of Justice shall establish minimum standards for—

- (1) the issuance of alerts through the AMBER Alert communications network; and
- (2) the extent of the dissemination of alerts issued through the network.

(b) Limitations

(1) The minimum standards established under subsection (a) shall be adoptable on a voluntary basis only.

(2) The minimum standards shall, to the maximum extent practicable (as determined by the Coordinator in consultation with State, territorial, tribal, and local law enforcement agencies), provide that appropriate information relating to the special needs of an abducted child (including health care needs) are disseminated to the appropriate law enforcement, public health, and other public officials.

(3) The minimum standards shall, to the maximum extent practicable (as determined by the Coordinator in consultation with State, territorial, tribal, and local law enforcement agencies), provide that the dissemination of an alert through the AMBER Alert communications network be limited to the geographic areas most likely to facilitate the recovery of the abducted child concerned.

(4) In carrying out activities under subsection (a), the Coordinator may not interfere with the current system of voluntary coordination between local broadcasters and State, territorial, tribal, and local law enforcement agencies for purposes of the AMBER Alert communications network.

(c) Cooperation

(1) The Coordinator shall cooperate with the Secretary of Transportation, the Secretary of Homeland Security, and the Federal Communications Commission in carrying out activities under this section.

(2) The Coordinator shall also cooperate with local broadcasters and State, territorial, tribal, and local law enforcement agencies in establishing minimum standards under this section.

(Pub. L. 108–21, title III, §302, Apr. 30, 2003, 117 Stat. 661; Pub. L. 116–283, div. H, title C, §10001(a)(2), Jan. 1, 2021, 134 Stat. 4861.)

Editorial Notes**CODIFICATION**

Section was formerly classified to section 5791a of Title 42, The Public Health and Welfare, prior to editorial reclassification and renumbering as this section.

AMENDMENTS

2021—Subsec. (b)(2) to (4). Pub. L. 116-283, §10001(a)(2)(A), inserted “, territorial, tribal,” after “State”.

Subsec. (c)(1). Pub. L. 116-283, §10001(a)(2)(B)(i), inserted “, the Secretary of Homeland Security,” after “Secretary of Transportation”.

Subsec. (c)(2). Pub. L. 116-283, §10001(a)(2)(B)(ii), inserted “, territorial, tribal,” after “State”.

§ 20503. Grant program for notification and communications systems along highways and major transportation routes for recovery of abducted children

(a) Program required

The Secretary of Transportation (referred to in this section as the “Secretary”) shall carry out a program to provide grants to States for the development or enhancement of notification or communications systems along highways and at airports, maritime ports, border crossing areas and checkpoints, and ports of exit from the United States for alerts and other information for the recovery of abducted children.

(b) Development grants**(1) In general**

The Secretary may make a grant to a State under this subsection for the development of a State program for the use of changeable message signs or other information systems to notify motorists, aircraft passengers, ship passengers, and travelers about abductions of children. The State program shall provide for the planning, coordination, and design of systems, protocols, and message sets that support the coordination and communication necessary to notify motorists, aircraft passengers, ship passengers, and travelers about abductions of children.

(2) Eligible activities

A grant under this subsection may be used by a State for the following purposes:

(A) To develop general policies and procedures to guide the use of changeable message signs or other information systems to notify motorists, aircraft passengers, ship passengers, and travelers about abductions of children.

(B) To develop guidance or policies on the content and format of alert messages to be conveyed on changeable message signs or other traveler information systems.

(C) To coordinate State, regional, and local plans for the use of changeable message signs or other transportation related issues.

(D) To plan secure and reliable communications systems and protocols among public safety and transportation agencies or modify existing communications systems to support the notification of motorists, aircraft passengers, ship passengers, and travelers about abductions of children.

(E) To plan and design improved systems for communicating with motorists, aircraft passengers, ship passengers, and travelers, including the capability for issuing wide area alerts to motorists, aircraft passengers, ship passengers, and travelers.

(F) To plan systems and protocols to facilitate the efficient issuance of child abduction notification and other key information to motorists, aircraft passengers, ship passengers, and travelers during off-hours.

(G) To provide training and guidance to transportation authorities to facilitate appropriate use of changeable message signs and other traveler information systems for the notification of motorists, aircraft passengers, ship passengers, and travelers about abductions of children.

(c) Implementation grants**(1) In general**

The Secretary may make a grant to a State under this subsection for the implementation of a program for the use of changeable message signs or other information systems to notify motorists, aircraft passengers, ship passengers, and travelers about abductions of children. A State shall be eligible for a grant under this subsection if the Secretary determines that the State has developed a State program in accordance with subsection (b).

(2) Eligible activities

A grant under this subsection may be used by a State to support the implementation of systems that use changeable message signs or other information systems to notify motorists, aircraft passengers, ship passengers, and travelers about abductions of children. Such support may include the purchase and installation of changeable message signs or other information systems to notify motorists, aircraft passengers, ship passengers, and travelers about abductions of children.

(d) Federal share**(1) In general**

Except as provided in paragraph (2), the Federal share of the cost of any activities funded by a grant under this section may not exceed 80 percent.

(2) Waiver

If the Secretary determines that American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, or the Virgin Islands of the United States is unable to comply with the requirement under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall waive such requirement.

(e) Distribution of grant amounts

The Secretary shall, to the maximum extent practicable, distribute grants under this section equally among the States that apply for a grant under this section within the time period prescribed by the Secretary.

(f) Administration

The Secretary shall prescribe requirements, including application requirements, for the receipt of grants under this section.

(g) Definition

In this chapter, the term “State” means any of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, Amer-