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Roadway Safety Groups Provide Funding for Safe Youth Mobility in Underserved Areas

*\$125,000 in grants to Hawaii, Idaho, Maryland, Oregon and Texas will
provide safer walking, biking and scooting options for youth in
disadvantaged communities*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Governors Highway Safety Association has awarded a total of \$125,000 from the National Road Safety Foundation to five states to partner with community-based groups to implement safe youth mobility programs focusing on walking, biking and/or riding a scooter. This is the third consecutive year that GHSA and NRSF have provided funding to State Highway Safety Offices (SHSOs) for youth safety initiatives in socioeconomically disadvantaged areas with limited financial resources.

Traffic crashes are one of the leading causes of death for young people in the United States and the numbers are going in the wrong direction. Both traffic deaths and injuries of youth rose significantly in 2021, the most recent year of complete [data](#) from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Nearly 1,200 youth (age 14 and younger) died in traffic crashes that year, up 8% from 2020 and an average of three deaths per day. Injuries were up a staggering 17% to 162,298 – an average of 444 every day.

“Our youngest road users have a right to be safe on the road even if a car isn’t part of their journey, said GHSA Chief Executive Officer Jonathan Adkins.

“Unfortunately, dangerous driving and poor or missing infrastructure mean youth are at risk every time they walk, bike, scoot or stakeboard near motor vehicles. GHSA and the National Road Safety Foundation remain committed to providing financial support to help equip underserved communities with safe ways for youth to travel.”

The 2024 grants will enable five SHSOs – Hawaii, Idaho, Maryland, Oregon and Texas – to support, implement and evaluate the following youth active transportation safety programs:

- The **Hawaii Department of Transportation's (HDOT) Highway Safety Office** and the Ka'u School District are collaborating to enhance safe transportation for the youth of Ocean View, Naalehu and Pahala. This initiative builds upon qualitative research conducted by HDOT and the University of Hawaii aimed at addressing traffic safety issues in this underserved community. To promote safe walking from transit stops to school, students will be provided reflective materials, whistles and shoes. In addition, as a result of community listening sessions, infrastructure and systems recommendations will be shared with local safety engineers and transit providers.
- The **Idaho Office of Highway Safety** is partnering with the Idaho Walk Bike Alliance to provide several communities hands-on classroom instruction specifically curated for Idaho's roads. This project aims to fill an educational void for middle and high school students, specifically bridging the gap between K-6 Safe Routes to School programming and driver education and training. Students will learn about active transportation modes such as walking, biking or scooting, which provide equitable access to school for many in the community.
- The **Maryland Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Administration's Highway Safety Office** is teaming up with the City of Salisbury and Salisbury University to launch a new project focused on enhancing transportation safety in the area. The project aims to empower young leaders to be peer-to-peer educators so they can teach their fellow youth about pedestrian, bicycle and other safe mobility practices.
- The **Oregon Department of Transportation**, in partnership with the state's Safe Routes to School program, will construct a demonstration crosswalk and walking route in Odell, Ore., providing a safe way for elementary students to get to school. To involve youth in the project, a free after-school club for 5th-8th graders will be created. The club will take walking and rolling adventures within a mile of the school and engage neighbors and local businesses in the demonstration project. Once the installation is completed, the Odell Mid Valley Elementary School "Pumas" will be encouraged to join a walking school bus that will take this route to and from school.
- The **Texas Department of Transportation** is planning to equip its Traffic Safety Specialists with an outreach toolkit that includes active transportation educational resources. The toolkit will be used to host youth transportation safety events across the state during which students can learn about safe bicycling, road patterns and best practices when riding on the road. The events will provide students with interactive activities that simulate road scenarios in a safe environment separated from motor vehicle traffic.

“Across the country, our neighborhoods of color have been neglected for too long, and youth are paying the price,” said Michelle Anderson, NRSF Director of Operations. “The National Roadway Safety Foundation is again partnering with GHSA to provide equitable, affordable and sustainable transportation options to underserved communities to create a safer today and tomorrow for our youngest road users.”

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About GHSA

The Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) is a nonprofit association representing the highway safety offices of states, territories, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. GHSA provides leadership and representation for the states and territories to improve traffic safety, influence national policy, enhance program management and promote best practices. Its members are appointed by their Governors to administer federal and state highway safety funds and implement state highway safety plans. Visit ghsa.org for more information or find us on [Facebook](#) and [X/Twitter](#).

About NRSF

The National Road Safety Foundation, Inc., a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization founded more than 60 years ago, produces traffic safety programs on distracted driving, speed and aggression, impaired driving, drowsy driving, driver proficiency, pedestrian safety and a host of other safety issues. It distributes the programs free of charge to schools, police and traffic safety advocates, community groups and individuals. It also sponsors contests to engage teens in promoting safe driving to their peers and in their communities. For more information or to download free programs, visit nrsf.org.