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Contact: [Adam Snider](#) (GHSA)  
202-580-7930, 202-365-8971 (after hours)  
[David Reich](#) (NRSF)  
914-325-9997

## **Governors Highway Safety Association, National Road Safety Foundation Award \$75,000 in Grants to Three States for Safe Youth Active Mobility**

*As traffic deaths rise, states partner with community organizations to help youth develop safety skills*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Governors Highway Safety Association has awarded grants totaling \$75,000 from the National Road Safety Foundation to State Highway Safety Offices in Connecticut, New York and Pennsylvania to work with community-based groups to promote safe youth mobility options like walking, biking or riding a scooter.

Traffic crashes are one of the leading causes of death for children in the United States. Almost one-third of all pedestrian fatalities and half of cyclists killed in crashes were children under age 15, according to a NYU Langone School of Medicine [study](#), which analyzed National Highway Traffic Safety Administration statistics over a 15-year period. A surge in dangerous driver behavior during the pandemic – speeding, and impaired and distracted driving – has put the U.S. on track for the deadliest year on our roads in a more than a decade. The impact of dangerous driving has fallen disproportionately on Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC), as outlined in a 2021 [GHSA study](#) confirming that BIPOC are overrepresented in traffic crash fatalities.

These new grants will provide resources for community outreach and engagement efforts to make it safer for youth and teens to walk, bike or ride a scooter. In Erie County, Pa., the funding will be used to implement or expand local programs that create safe walking routes to schools. A grant in Hartford, Conn., will be used to recruit and train youth ambassadors to educate their peers about bicycle and pedestrian safety. In New York City, the funding will provide peer-to-peer outreach promoting pedestrian, bicycle and scooter safety.

“Youth, whether walking, bicycling, or scooting, due to dangerous motorists, are at risk when they share the road with drivers,” said Jonathan Adkins, Executive

Director of GHSA. “This funding will allow three states to work with local partners to reach more diverse and low-income communities, where walking and biking is more common. We hope these grants will encourage more youth to be able to safely walk, bike and scoot.”

The funding for Connecticut will support Watch for Me CT, a partnership between the Connecticut Department of Transportation’s Highway Safety Office and the Connecticut Children’s Injury Prevention Center that works to reduce traffic crashes involving pedestrians and bicyclists. About 1,500 pedestrian and 550 bicyclists in the state are hit by drivers every year. The grant will enable the program to recruit and train youth in the Yard Goats Young Ambassadors Program, an afterschool initiative run by the Hartford Yard Goats, a minor league affiliate of the Colorado Rockies. The teens will be trained to teach bicycle and pedestrian safety to their peers, culminating with a community-wide safety event and the creation and distribution of multilingual educational materials. Young ambassadors will also receive a complimentary bicycle, helmet and lights for their commitment to educating their peers. Efforts such as these will make bicycling more the norm and encourage broader systemic changes that will benefit all road users.

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation’s Bureau of Safety Operations will partner with United Way of Erie County to pilot a Safer Walking Routes to School initiative at Iroquois Elementary School, a community school. The Title 1 school serves students in kindergarten through sixth grade, many of whom must walk along busy streets. The project will emphasize engaging youth in educating their peers about pedestrian safety, a proven countermeasure that encourages youth to adopt critical safety skills. This includes inviting students of all ages to participate in GPS mapping to identify hazards along commonly used routes to their school to determine the safest routes, and the development and implementation of a public awareness and education campaign for students, parents and community members.

In New York, the funds will be used by the Governor’s Traffic Safety Committee and the New York City Department of Transportation to conduct multilingual education and outreach in the Bronx, one of the nation’s most diverse communities. Teens will be recruited and trained to serve as peer-to-peer instructors promoting safety on scooters, skateboards and other micromobility devices. They will receive and deliver instruction in proper helmet fit and use, safe bicycle and scooter riding, and relevant vehicle and traffic safety laws. The youth instructors will work through a variety of community-based organizations, their schools and hospitals to ensure the safety message is heard by their peers, thus encouraging more people to seek transportation alternatives not involving a car or truck.

“These programs will help pave the way for agencies and groups nationwide to help reduce the terrible toll of our young people being killed and injured on our roads and highways,” said Michelle Anderson, Director of Operations for the National Road Safety Foundation, a nonprofit organization that for 60 years has been creating and distributing free traffic safety educational resources. “By actively

working with diverse and underserved communities and leveraging proven peer-to-peer learning techniques, these programs will help a wide range of young people develop critical active mobility safety skills.”

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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](http://ghsa.org) for more information or find us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

### **About NRSF**

The National Road Safety Foundation, now in its 60th year, produces free videos and teaching materials on distracted driving, speed and aggression, impaired driving, drowsy driving, driver proficiency, pedestrian safety and a host of other safety issues. It also sponsors contests to engage teens in promoting safe driving to their peers and in their communities, partnering nationally with youth advocacy groups including SADD and FCCLA and regionally with auto shows in Los Angeles, Chicago and Washington, D.C.