



# Safe Routes to School

State Networks Create Policy Changes



## BACKGROUND

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a national and international movement that is creating safe, convenient, and fun opportunities for children to bicycle and walk to and from schools. The program has been designed to reverse the decline in children walking and bicycling to schools. Safe Routes to School can also play a critical role in reversing the alarming nationwide trend toward childhood obesity and inactivity.

Within the span of one generation, the percentage of children walking or bicycling to school has dropped precipitously, from approximately 50% in 1969<sup>1</sup> to just 15% in 2001<sup>2</sup>. As a result, kids today are less active, less independent, and less healthy. As much as 20 to 30% of morning traffic can be parents driving their children to schools<sup>3</sup>, and half of children struck by cars near schools are hit by parents driving other children to school<sup>4</sup>.

Over the past 40 years, rates of obesity have soared among children of all ages in the United States, and approximately 25 million children and adolescents—more than 33%—are now overweight or obese<sup>5</sup>. Kids are less active today, and 23% of children get no free time physical activity at all<sup>6</sup>. The prevalence of obesity is so great that today's generation of children may be the first in over 200 years to live less healthy and have a shorter lifespan than their parents<sup>7</sup>.

Concerned by the long-term health and traffic consequences of this trend, in 2005 the U.S. Congress approved \$612 million in funding for five years of state implementation of SRTS programs in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Communities are using this Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)-administered funding to construct new bicycle lanes, pathways, and sidewalks, as well as to launch Safe Routes to School education, promotion and enforcement campaigns in elementary and middle schools.

The primary goal of Safe Routes to School is to get more children bicycling and walking to schools safely every day; this provides for health, safety, environmental, transportation, and community benefits. The most successful SRTS programs incorporate the five E's—evaluation, education, encouragement, engineering, and enforcement. Safe Routes to School programs are built on collaborative partnerships among many stakeholders that include educators, parents, students, elected officials, engineers, city planners, business and community leaders, health officials, and bicycle and pedestrian advocates.

## STATE NETWORK PROJECT

The SRTS National Partnership, a national network of more than 350 organizations, recognizes that the potential for SRTS is much broader than the \$612 million in funds available now. In addition, as SRTS is a new federal program, it is critical that the funds are implemented in each state in an effective and high-quality manner that demonstrates results, or Congress may not continue the program. As such, the SRTS National Partnership is implementing the State Network Project to ensure program success and leverage resources by creating SRTS State Networks in 9 states -- California, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, New York, Oklahoma, Texas, and Virginia -- plus the District of Columbia. These ten jurisdictions account for over a third of federal SRTS funding—over \$226 million.

The states were chosen due to their high rates of childhood obesity, diversity, poverty, and other special circumstances. In each of the ten jurisdictions, the SRTS National Partnership is also assisting a low-income community or school in their efforts to apply for and implement a SRTS program, and to measure and evaluate the results.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has provided primary support for the three-year State Network Project (2007 – 2009). The Network Project is also funded in part by the Bikes Belong Coalition, Kaiser Permanente and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The principal goals of the State Network Project are to:

- 1) Increase physical activity in school-aged children grades K–8 by increasing the number of children walking and bicycling to schools in 10 key states;
- 2) Help to ensure success of the federal SRTS program in the key states; and
- 3) Institutionalize SRTS state-level programs in the key states so that it is not dependent on (and does not end after) one short burst of funding.

Each of the ten SRTS State Networks partner with state Departments of Transportation, Health and Education, and other stakeholders including state and regional advocacy groups, elected officials, businesses, universities, and others to help fully commit available SRTS funds, and to help create and maintain State SRTS Advisory Committees in states without existing committees. The networks also create Action Plans

<sup>1</sup> Transportation Characteristics of School Children, Report no. 4. Washington, DC: Nationwide personal Transportation Study, federal Highway Administration, July 1972.

<sup>2</sup> "Travel and Environmental Implications of School Siting." U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 231-R-03-004: 2, 2003. Available at [www.epa.gov/livability/school\\_travel.html](http://www.epa.gov/livability/school_travel.html)

<sup>3</sup> Marin County Congestion, a report by the Marin County Congestion Management Agency, January 2002

<sup>4</sup> Washington State Department of Transportation; cited in Safe Routes to School, National Highway Transportation & Safety Administration, 2002.

<sup>5</sup> "Obesity Still a Major Problem." National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 14 April 2006. Available at [www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/06facts/obesity03\\_04.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/06facts/obesity03_04.htm).

<sup>6</sup> "A Nation at Risk—Childhood Obesity Sourcebook—(Physical activity levels among children aged 9-13 years—United States, 2002." Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report 2003; 52[33]:785-8, and "National Health Interview Survey." National center for Health statistics, 1999-2001

<sup>7</sup> S. Jay Olshansky, Ph.D., et al., "A Potential Decline in Life Expectancy in the United States in the 21st Century," New England Journal of Medicine: Volume 352: 1138-1145, March 17, 2005.

Girls on the way to school in Atlanta, Georgia.



to leverage additional resources and improve conditions for walking and bicycling through policy changes such as: improved state-level recommendations on school siting and joint-use of facilities, Complete Streets, school wellness policies, leveraging other government funds for SRTS projects, fine-based funding mechanisms (such as creating double-fines for speeding in school zones and leveraging funds from other traffic violations), and other SRTS-related policies.

## NETWORK STRUCTURE AND ACTIVITIES

Each SRTS State Network has between 10-30 partners and is facilitated by a part-time contracted State Network Organizer. State Networks develop, implement and periodically review and refine State Action Plans to guide the efforts of the networks in ensuring the success of the federal SRTS program, leveraging resources and achieving policy changes. State Network telephone or in-person meetings are held at least monthly. State Network partners help with outreach and promotion, education, research, advocacy, and convening stakeholders within their field. An emphasis is placed on collaborative efforts between organizations and initiatives with similar goals, in an effort to increase state agency and community buy-in, and to have a positive educational influence on decision makers.

State Network Action Teams are also convened on single policy issues in order to develop materials and model policies, and to plan outreach and advocacy efforts. Depending on the nature of an Action Team's focus issue, the Team may be ongoing, or it may sunset after goals are achieved. Network partners with expertise in the focus issue lead the Team, and the Team's activities are organized and tracked through the State Action Plan.

Due to the uniqueness of each state, each State Network prioritizes which policies are emphasized at any particular time. For instance, if a State Network discovers that a state Department of Education guidebook on school construction, size and location is being reviewed in the near future, an Action Team may be convened to research the existing state policies

and develop model policy language. The Action Team may then develop a plan for proposing the inclusion of the model policy language during the agency's review process, and once the review is completed and the policy is incorporated, the Team will track implementation of the improved policy.

In another example, a Department of Transportation's Safe Routes to School program may be struggling to achieve some of its goals, so the State Network may assist the SRTS program in reaching its goals through outreach to stakeholders, technical assistance, promotions and the creation or distribution of other resources.

To create a learning network among the 10 State Networks, SRTS National Partnership staff meet individually with the State Network Organizers on a weekly basis, and hold monthly Network Organizer group discussions and convene an annual in-person multi-day meeting with all ten Organizers. The SRTS National Partnership also facilitates monthly training sessions on various policy topics, where Network Organizers and interested State Network partners can learn best practices directly from nationally-recognized policy experts and experienced local professionals.

SRTS State Networks were first convened between May and October 2007, except in Texas, where the State Network was launched in July 2008. In the short time they have been in existence, each Network has achieved its own successes and faces its own unique policy challenges. The State Department of Transportation (DOT) SRTS Coordinators participate in all ten of the State Networks, and in three states, the Network has become the state DOT Safe Routes to School program's Advisory Committee. In some states, Network partner organizations have already begun work on key policy issues and achieved initial success, but in other states there simply are no organizations with previous expertise or experience in those policy issues, so State Networks have had to start from scratch. In many situations, a State Network is the first group to research, advocate and create a vision for how to address particular policy issues in the state. The SRTS National Partnership created the Safe Routes to School State Network Project 2007 Annual Progress Report, which was distributed to every state elected official and state agency leader in the ten State Network jurisdictions. The future of SRTS programs in the United States may well be influenced by how well the SRTS State Network Project succeeds and grows.

The following pages highlight SRTS State Network leadership and selected core partners, and describe the first year accomplishments and policy achievements, challenges and lessons learned, for each of the ten State Networks, in alphabetical order.





## Network Partners

**Lead organization:** SRTS National Partnership

**Network Chair:** SRTS National Partnership

**Core Partners:** Cities Counties Schools Partnership; CA Center for Physical Activity, Injury Prevention & Control-Division of Public Health; California State PTA; California Bicycle Coalition; California Center for Cities & Schools; California League of Cities; California School Board Association; Kaiser Permanente Community Health Initiative; Los Angeles Unified School District; Local Government Commission; Prevention Institute; Transportation and Land Use Coalition (Bay Area); University of California-Berkeley Traffic Safety Center

## Accomplishments and Policy Changes

### > *State Program Outreach and Earned Media*

In February 2008 the California State Network worked to get the word out across the state about the availability of state Safe Routes to School funds, and believes that the sheer number of funds requested and applications submitted are a result of the outreach the Network undertook. A total of 489 applications requesting a total of \$206,462,813 were received for the \$52 million available in Cycle 7 of the state funded program; 139 of the applications were funded. The CA State Network also encouraged the CA Department of Transportation to conduct media outreach to celebrate the awards for the Cycle 7 approved projects. After the awards were announced, more than 25 newspaper articles and television spots about the Safe Routes to School program goals and funding appeared throughout the state. The CA Network also publicized the \$46 million call for applications for Cycle 2 of the federal program, and another large response was received from communities throughout the state, showing large and consistent demand for the popular program.

### > *School Siting*

In the fall of 2007 the CA Network formed an Action Team of State Network partner organizations and named it “The Ad-Hoc Coalition for Healthy School Siting”. This school siting Action Team conducted research, and in January 2008 submitted a letter to the California Department of Education, urging them to revise current regulatory requirements with respect to school siting while the department is undergoing its current guidebook revisions. More than forty California-based organizations signed on in support of the letter. In March 2008

members of the CA Network participated in a meeting with the California Department of Education to discuss their school siting recommendations. The school siting Action Team, with the Local Government Commission as the lead organization, was awarded a grant in August 2008 from the National Trust for Historic Preservation to advance school siting policy in California. Grant funds will be used to continue the Action Team’s efforts.

### > *Strategic Highway Safety Plan*

In 2005 the federal government established a new Highway Safety Improvement Program for the purpose of achieving a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on public roads. The program requires each state to develop a Strategic Highway Safety Plan. During 2007 and 2008, CA State Network partners strategically positioned themselves in the Issue Group working areas for Walking, Bicycling and Intersections, during the creation of the state’s Strategic Highway Safety Plan, and succeeded in getting Safe Routes to School listed as a priority for each of these issue areas. The CA Network will monitor how the California Department of Transportation funds the new SRTS priorities during implementation of the Plan.

### > *Collaborative for High Performing Schools (CHPS)*

CHPS has developed and continues to maintain a six-volume technical best practices manual for creating high performance schools. The manual was developed through a consensus process with the assistance of school officials, state agencies, industry representatives and design professionals. CHPS periodically updates each volume of the manual. In June 2008 the CA Network collaborated with CHPS during the process of revising the manual. CHPS agreed to four of the five recommendations suggested by the Network, which related to travel to school, bicycle parking, and automobile parking restrictions.





A California Bike Train on the way home from school.

## Lessons Learned and Challenges

### > *Federal Funds Administrative Challenge*

The federally funded SRTS program requires adherence to complex federal regulations and therefore requires local program applicants to undergo a great deal of administrative work in order to qualify for funds. This has discouraged some communities from applying for funds, and others struggle with the amount of effort required for the relatively small amounts of funds available. In December 2007 the CA State Network organized a meeting with the CA Department of Transportation and its 'Non-Infrastructure' grant recipients to discuss how to improve grant implementation issues that have been especially problematic for non-traditional grant recipients. After meeting with the CA Network, the DOT developed an 11-step checklist for securing the funds, extended the deadline for finalizing contracts with the state, and changed other procedures to ease implementation.

### > *Research Capacity Challenge*

There is a great need for research in order to bolster State Network policy advocacy. For example, during the CA school siting Action Team's process of providing policy recommendations, the CA Department of Education requested California-specific best practice examples of smaller schools that are successfully sited within neighborhoods and are achieving academic standards and goals. The CA State Network didn't have these specific examples available, due to the lack of resources to conduct statewide research, but the group hopes to develop such examples in the future, with additional financial resources.

***For more about the California State Network, go to:***

<http://www.saferoutespartnership.org/state/4373/california>



## Network Partners

**Lead organization:** Washington Area Bicyclist Association

**Network Chair:** Council of the District of Columbia

**Core Partners:** ASPIRA; DC Charter School Board; Coalition for Smarter Growth; DC Office of Planning-Neighborhood Planning; DC Public Schools -PE/Health; and -Special Education/Social Work Services; Department of Health-Policy, Planning and Research; and -Nutrition/PE Programs; Department of Transportation-SRTS Program; Howard University Department of Civil Engineering; Metropolitan Police Department; Safe Kids DC

## Accomplishments and Policy Changes

### > Funds for Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Improvements

The DC State Network educated its Partners regarding how Traffic Fine Revenue can be utilized for SRTS programs, citing Portland, Oregon's robust program funding source. This education came during a period of high pedestrian fatalities and mounting local frustration at not being able to use federal funds expediently to improve problem intersections. Shortly afterwards the DC Council set aside local funds (\$1.5 million, recurring annually) into a Safety Fund to be used for pedestrian and bicycle improvements, including near schools.

### > DC Safe Routes to School Program Coordinator Hired

In February 2008 the DC State Network conducted a letter writing and phone campaign to encourage the DC Department of Transportation (DDOT) to hire a permanent SRTS Coordinator in order to expedite development and implementation of the federally-funded program, after two years of prior delays. The new SRTS Coordinator was hired by the DOT in March 2008, and the program was established quickly.

### > DC Network Serves as Advisory Committee

The DC State Network serves as the advisory committee for the DC Department of Transportation's Safe Routes to School program. The DC Network meets regularly to advise the department on program development, implementation and selection of applications. Recently, 13 schools were selected to receive infrastructure improvements and program services. Originally, only 10 schools were to be selected as part of the

pilot program, but DC Network partners were able to influence the department's decision to fund all 13 applicant schools in the program.

### > DC Network Provides Technical Expertise

DC's crossing guard program leaders approached the DC Network and asked for assistance with the location placement of guards, in order to utilize the expertise of national and State Network professionals. With the launch of DC's SRTS Pilot School Program at 13 schools, crossing guard placement has become an increasing public interest. The DC Network will help DC's crossing guard program ensure that its crossing guards are placed in maximally beneficial locations, not only for the paramount safety of DC's students, but also to help ensure the success of the SRTS Pilot School Program.

### > Network Helps Prevent Delay

After hearing that the Mayor's office would delay the launch of the DC Safe Routes to School pilot program until fall 2008, DC Network partners made a focused effort to convince the Mayor's office to ensure that the SRTS program would launch without further delay so that the DC Department of Transportation contractors and 13 pilot schools could begin their program planning in time for the coming school year. The program launch announcement was released to the press on August 6, 2008, and program work began soon thereafter.

## Lessons Learned and Challenges

### > Policy Makers Help Push the Agenda

State Networks have learned that they benefit greatly from their individual partners, especially those in positions of influence, such as elected officials. For example, the DC Network Chair, a District of Columbia Ward 6 Councilmember, has taken the lead in pushing for acceptance of the "Complete Streets" concept by all appropriate district departments. The Council also hosted a Complete Streets training for DC's transportation engineers and planners, in partnership with DC Network organizations. The Councilmember periodically educates Network Partners regarding how to successfully advocate for new policy platforms to various DC government departments (see Funds for Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Improvements above, for an example)

### For more about the DC Network, go to:

<http://www.saferoutespartnership.org/state/4373/dc>





## Network Partners

**Lead organization:** GEORGIA BIKES!

**Network Chair:** Commissioner – the City of Decatur

**Core Partners:** Alliance For A Healthier Generation; American Heart Association; Georgia Action For Healthy Kids; Georgia Department of Community Affairs-Office of Planning and Quality Growth; Georgia Department of Transportation-Office Of Planning; Georgia Physical Activity Network; North Georgia Bicycle Dealers Association; PEDS; SafeKids Georgia; Safe Routes Athens.

## Accomplishments and Policy Changes

### > Statewide Wellness Policy

Although federally mandated wellness policies were in place in most Georgia schools by June 2006, before the State Network Project was launched, local school districts periodically review and revise their wellness policies, so information about Safe Routes

to School was included in Georgia Department of Education's presentation materials at three education-related conferences in the summer of 2008, in order to reach school district personnel from around the state. This opportunity was made possible due to the participation of the Georgia Department of Education in the GA Network. This outreach is influencing local school districts to incorporate SRTS elements into their wellness policies. Network partners will monitor and advise on implementation of wellness policies in schools around the state, to ensure that SRTS program activities are taking place.

### > Promoting the Health Benefits of SRTS

The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) established a policy that the health benefits of participating in a SRTS program would not be promoted throughout the life of the federally funded program. Three GA Network partners met with a GDOT Transportation Board Member to inform him that the SRTS program will not be promoting the health benefits of SRTS, even though the federal government and other states recognize these benefits. That Board member now oversees the SRTS program within GDOT, and has committed to allowing for health promotion activities. The State Network convened an Action

Team to promote the health benefits of SRTS, and State Network partners were interviewed for an Associated Press article that featured the health benefits of SRTS, which was published by media outlets around Georgia and the US.

### > Outreach to Influential Stakeholder Organizations

GA Network partners participated in regularly scheduled PLAY (Policy Leadership for Active Youth), G-PAN (Georgia Physical Activity Network), and NGBDA (North Georgia Bicycle Dealers Association) meetings and conferences, making presentations on the status of SRTS related programs and policies in Georgia. These coalitions represent many member organizations and are highly influential in Georgia.

## Lessons Learned and Challenges

### > Ongoing SRTS Program Delays

The Georgia SRTS program, administered by the Georgia Department of Transportation, experienced significant delays in launching the federally funded program, which was authorized by the federal government to begin in 2005. Administrative delays and errors, staff turnover and a program

redesign resulted in Georgia taking last place out of all 50 states in launching its SRTS program. And although there is a diverse public Advisory Committee for the GDOT SRTS program, it hasn't met since 2007. The Georgia Network made the launch of the state SRTS program its highest priority. The Network corresponded with the Commissioner of Transportation, educated Congressional members about the delay of the GDOT SRTS program compared to the other 49 states, and met with a GDOT Transportation Board Member to inform him of the delayed status of the GDOT SRTS program. Inspired by the news from the GA Network, a Georgia Congressional Delegation letter was submitted to the GDOT Commissioner (10 of Georgia's 13 Representatives signed), requesting no further delays in the program's launch, which would result in the distribution of \$16 million to local communities to develop SRTS programs and projects. As of August 2008, a subsequent administrative error has delayed the program again. The Network is currently working on plans to take action to reduce this new delay, so that local communities can benefit from the federal funds.

**For more about the Georgia State Network, go to:**  
<http://www.saferoutespartnership.org/state/4373/georgia>



Walking to school in Atlanta, Georgia.



## Network Partners

**Lead Organization:** Chicagoland Bicycle Federation

**Network Chair:** Office of Lt. Governor

**Core Partners:** Action for Healthy Kids – Illinois; America Walks; American Heart Association; Center for Neighborhood Technology; Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District; Chicago Public Schools; Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning; Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago Children (CLOCC); FHWA; Healthy Schools Campaign; Illinois Department of Public Health; Illinois Department of Transportation; Illinois Park and Recreation Association; League of Illinois Bicyclists; Tri-County Regional Planning Commission; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5

## Accomplishments and Policy Changes

### > Outreach and Media Attention Gets Results

In June 2007 Illinois communities submitted nearly \$78 million in SRTS grant requests for 1,044 projects, and in October 2007 the selection committee for the SRTS program completed its review of applications, but as of December 2007, the recommendations for applications were still being reviewed by the Illinois Department of Transportation's (IDOT) upper management. Finalists were then to be forwarded to the Governor's office for approval. The Illinois Network and an Illinois Congressman contacted the IDOT director requesting that there be no further delays. Network partners sent out statewide action alerts out about the delay, and in early March 2008 an advocacy group contacted media outlets to publicize the long delay. Articles focusing on the delay of the Safe Routes to School program, which affects the health of children, were published in the *Chicago Sun Times* and *Chicago Tribune* soon thereafter, and the Governor's award announcement for \$8.3 million was released within a week of publication.

### > Elected Officials are Agents of Change

The Illinois SRTS Network regularly educates elected officials throughout the state on the policy issues prioritized by the Illinois Network. This education takes place during State Network meetings, through letter-writing and fact sheets, phone and email outreach, and it has achieved results: an Illinois Congressman helped to expedite the launch of the Illinois SRTS program, and although State Networks do not lobby elected officials, through an increased focus on the health and safety of children, other

state elected officials have been inspired to create new legislation to resolve various policy issues in the state, including the Green Buildings Act to make mandatory at least one of the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Alternative Transportation credits (4.1 and 4.2) in new state funded construction, which includes schools; a "Complete Streets" bill, which requires Illinois to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists in its urban road designs; and a Hazardous Route Busing bill that would allow Illinois school districts to use hazard route busing funds for SRTS projects.

### > Increasing Quality of Applications for SRTS Funding

Many communities in Illinois (and other states) are interested in getting kids active, but do not yet understand the best practices of a SRTS program, which includes a focus not only on engineering, but also on encouragement, education, evaluation and enforcement. The Illinois Network, which also serves as the Illinois Department of Transportation's SRTS Advisory Committee, suggested changes in the IDOT SRTS funding program in order to increase the quality of applications from local communities, and IDOT responded by increasing the minimum funding amount for non-infrastructure – encouragement, education, evaluation and enforcement - to \$2,000 per individual project. IDOT has also collaborated with the Illinois Network's lead organization to provide SRTS trainings to communities across the state, in addition to coordinating the first Illinois SRTS Conference in August 2008, which was attended by 75 people. These opportunities to interact with schools and municipalities provide the Illinois Network with ways to directly encourage hundreds of schools from around Illinois to apply for more non-infrastructure funding – which is important, as the state was only able to award 9% of its SRTS funding for non-infrastructure



Walking School Bus on the way to school in Chicago, Illinois.





Walking School Bus on the way to school in Chicago, Illinois.

programs, when the federal minimum is 10% (maximum is 30%). The Illinois Network will also work to increase non-infrastructure applications by working with IDOT's Division of Traffic Safety "402 Liaisons" to reach out to local communities.

## Lessons Learned and Challenges

### > *Advocacy Group as the SRTS Advisory Committee*

The Illinois Network succeeded in becoming the Advisory Committee for the Illinois Department of Transportation's SRTS program, an early success. However, due to the need for the Illinois Network to pursue its advocacy-related goals, relations between the Illinois Network and the Department of Transportation have occasionally become strained. This challenge is being discussed among the organizations, including the SRTS National Partnership's Advocacy Committee, in order to protect the status of the Illinois Network as a SRTS Advisory Committee as well as the Illinois Network's ability to advocate on policy issues.

### > *Policy Action Teams Are Important*

Creating small action teams to conduct research on and to raise awareness of individual issues has been a very important strategy for implementing policy change in Illinois. The Illinois Network has convened informal action teams to research fine-based

funding mechanisms, implementation of the SRTS funding program, and to research the feasibility of requiring school travel plans to receive hazard route bus funds, as well as to research sustainable school construction requirements. These teams have created plans and delegated tasks to interested partners in order to promote specific policy issues to implementing agencies.

### > *Action Alerts Can Make the Difference*

Distributing action alerts to stakeholders to encourage specific actions proved successful in getting IDOT upper management to announce SRTS funding awards after there were considerable delays. Action alerts calling on partners and stakeholders across the state to contact the Secretary of Transportation resulted in many phone calls, letters and emails. These inquiries sent a strong message to the Secretary of Transportation about the high level of community interest in getting an immediate SRTS funding awards announcement out to the public.

**For more about the Illinois State Network, go to:**

<http://www.saferoutespartnership.org/state/4373/illinois>



## Network Partners

**Lead Organization:** Kentucky Rails-to-Trails Council

**Core Partners:** Governor's Office of Wellness and Physical Activity; Ohio/Kentucky/Indiana Regional Council of Governments; Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center; Kentucky Bicycle and Bikeway Commission; Kentucky Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator; Warren County-Bowling Green Greenways; Injury Free Coalition for Kids-Lexington; Kentucky Safe Routes to School Coordinator.

## Accomplishments and Policy Changes

### > KY Safe Routes to School

#### **Program Coordinator Replaced**

The federal government requires each state DOT to employ a full time SRTS DOT Coordinator. In December 2007 the Safe Routes to School program coordinator was removed soon after a new state administration took office, and as of February 2008 there was still no replacement for this federally mandated and funded position. The Kentucky Network realized that the Transportation Cabinet was not expediting the process of hiring a replacement, and formally requested that there be no further delays. In March 2008 a new DOT coordinator was hired, and began working with the KY Network.

### > A Fair Share for Safety

In July 2007 the Kentucky Network learned that the federally-mandated state Strategic Highway Safety Plan failed to include pedestrians, bicyclists, or Safe Routes to School in any of the Areas of Emphasis of the plan. The Network approached the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) about the 2008 version and requested that pedestrian and bicycle safety concerns be reflected appropriately by using recommendations from the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) guides for the development of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, a nationally-recognized minimum standard. AASHTO is a nonprofit, nonpartisan association representing highway and transportation departments in all fifty states. Network partners on the KYTC staff responded immediately and began the process of locating the appropriate statistics and writing drafts for the next plan based on the Network's recommendations of using AASHTO standards. However, as of July 2008, the KYTC has yet to release a 2008 plan - fearing a reduction of bicycle and pedestrian

emphasis from the AASHTO guidelines, the Kentucky Network will research and promote the "Fair Share for Safety" concept (the percentage of funds spent on improving bicycle and pedestrian safety should equal the percentage of bicycle and pedestrian-related injuries and fatalities) in fall 2008.

### > Network Assists with State Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans

Beginning in July 2007, Kentucky Network partners worked with the KYTC on the revisions of the Kentucky State Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel Policy (a federally-mandated document), and the draft of a new State Bicycle Plan. Work on the State Bicycle Plan has been put on hold pending final review and approval by the new state administration. This plan is important, because it affects all bicycle- and pedestrian-related facilities in the state, which would include areas around schools.

## Lessons Learned and Challenges

### > State Administration Turnovers Stall Policy Work

During the first year that the KY Network has been in place (June 2007 through June 2008), there have been two different state administrations (transition began immediately after the November 2007 Governor's race). Kentucky is one of a few states that elects the major state offices the year before the national presidential and congressional races. New gubernatorial administrations will often replace staff members in government agencies; the KYTC lost both its Safe Routes to School coordinator and the bicycle/pedestrian coordinator soon after the new administration took office. Also, the loss of funding for the CDC-sponsored Governor's Office of Wellness and Physical Activity has reduced the KY Network's ability to work with the Kentucky Department of Health. As a result, KY Network communications with key agencies in both administrations has been limited, resulting in delays or stagnation on several key policy issues. The KY Network is working to get the vacant bicycle/pedestrian coordinator position filled quickly, since this position is highly valuable to the efforts of the KY Network. The KY Network is also looking for new partnerships with state agencies, including government coalitions such as Area Development Districts, and other divisions within state agencies.

**For more about the Kentucky State Network, go to:**  
<http://www.saferoutespartnership.org/state/4373/kentucky>



A Kentucky Bicycle Safety Education class poses for the camera.





## Network Partners

**Lead Organization:** Louisiana Public Health Institute

**Core Partners:** Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine; New Orleans Regional Planning Commission - Pedestrian & Bicycle Safety Program; Louisiana Department of Education; Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development; Action for Healthy Kids Program; New Orleans Recovery School District; Louisiana SAFE KIDS, Inc.; University of New Orleans Department of Planning and Urban Studies; Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports; Department of Health and Hospitals - Office of Public Health; Louisiana State Senate; Laboratory of Preventive Medicine Pennington Biomedical Research Center

## Accomplishments and Policy Changes

### > Complete Streets in New Orleans

The Louisiana SRTS State Network worked with the Regional Planning Commission to develop an informal "Complete Streets" policy for nearly \$200 Million in Hurricane Katrina road rebuilding projects. Streets with schools were assessed for necessary physical improvements, including crosswalks, signage, and sidewalk repairs. Recommendations were incorporated into designs. State funding for pedestrian- and bicycle-oriented facilities continues to be sought by the LA Network on an ongoing basis to fund these projects, as the use of federal recovery funding is not eligible.

### > Network Joins Louisiana Bicycle/Pedestrian Project Advisory Committee

Beginning in April 2008, LA Network partners attended meetings as part of the Project Advisory Committee for updates to the Louisiana Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. Most SRTS policy priorities are being addressed by this planning effort through the development and assignment of specific policy directives to stakeholder groups throughout the State, including LA Network partners. Statewide public meetings were held in July 2008. This is an ongoing effort, and a highly influential position for the LA Network.

### > School Wellness Policies Now Include SRTS

Louisiana State Network partners, including the Louisiana Public Health Institute, the LA Department of Education, and the LA Department of Health and Hospitals are working to strengthen the wellness policy that is currently used as a state



Getting ready to ride to school in New Orleans, Louisiana.

"model" policy and, when appropriate, encourage schools to adopt SRTS as part of the physical activity component of their local wellness policies. The LA Network partners provided leadership on school wellness policy initiatives. Research was conducted on model wellness policies and implementation strategies.

The LA Network made a presentation at the Department of Education's Coordinated School Health conference to promote the program.

## Lessons Learned and Challenges

### > SRTS Priorities are a Hard Sell Post Katrina

The biggest LA Network challenge in Louisiana so far has been organizing around issues that many decision-makers do not consider important in the 'post-Katrina' environment. The LA Network continually attempts to promote a balance between pressing basic needs still unmet after three years, and so-called 'peripheral' needs, including SRTS and bicycle and pedestrian facilities and policies. However, many opportunities to integrate bicycle and pedestrian policies and facilities, including Complete Streets, Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Curriculum, School Siting, and Wellness Policies, have been made possible due to the recovery efforts from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Numerous schools and roadways in coastal Louisiana are being built or rebuilt. The rebuilding of schools as the centers of communities, for instance, is taking place through the development of School Based Health Clinics, which are supporting the inclusion of Safe Routes to School in school wellness policies. Increased bicycle ridership and pedestrian trips due to gas price increases in recent months underscores the need for bicycle and pedestrian education of students and adults. And "livable communities" is a concept that now resonates with many people in Louisiana, but agencies don't have much knowledge about the benefits and implementation of it, so LA Network partners continue to promote SRTS as an integral part of a livable community in numerous community planning efforts.

**For more about the Louisiana State Network, go to:**  
<http://www.saferoutespartnership.org/state/4373/louisiana>





## Network Partners

**Lead Organization:** Be Active New York State

**Core Partners:** Alta Planning & Design; American Cancer Society; Bike New York; Governor's Traffic Safety Committee; National Association for Health & Fitness; NY Bicycle Coalition; NYS Association of Traffic Safety Boards; New York State (NYS) Department of Transportation – SRTS Program; NYS Department of Health - Healthy Heart Program; NYS Department of Health - Bureau of Injury Prevention; NYS Department of Health - Division of Nutrition; NYS Department of State - Land Use; NYS Education Department; NYS Metropolitan Planning Organization Association; NYS Parent Teacher Association; NYS Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Alliance; Parks & Trails New York; The RBA Group.

## Accomplishments and Policy Changes

### > Local Complete Streets Policy a State Model

The NY Network determined that achieving “Complete Streets” in New York would be a two-pronged approach, since New York is a ‘home rule’ state, and therefore local roadways would not be affected by a state policy – as such both local policies and a state policy is needed. In order to create a local model, the NY Network presented the “Complete Streets” concept to Buffalo’s Common Council, and in May 2008 the Council unanimously passed an ordinance amendment to the city charter creating a Complete Streets policy for the City of Buffalo. After the Buffalo policy passed, Erie County began drafting a similar policy (Buffalo is within Erie County). The NY Network has been promoting the new Buffalo policy as a model by distributing a policy brief to community transportation planning committees across the state to assist them in generating plans for relevant transportation projects, linked to local SRTS projects. In July 2008 NY Network partners presented “Complete Streets from Policy to Action” at the New York State MPO (Metropolitan Planning Organization) Association conference in Niagara Falls, NY. NY Network partners also met with the NY Department of Transportation commissioner in January 2008 to inspire the state agency to adopt a statewide Complete Streets policy.

### > Getting the SRTS Program Going

As of spring 2007 the \$27 million SRTS program (authorized by the federal government in 2005) had not yet been launched. The NY Network identified this as the first major policy issue for its Action Plan. The NY Network began an educational campaign to

key legislative officials in the state who could influence the NY Transportation Department’s (NYDOT) decision to launch the SRTS program. In August 2007 the NY Network authored and distributed a position paper to key elected officials along with a sample cover letter. In response, a state senator held a press conference, members of the western NY congressional delegation sent letters, and the Governor’s office also made contact with the NYDOT, all urging the department to launch the program without further delay. In September 2007, the State SRTS program was launched, making \$27 million in funding available for local construction and education projects, and \$27 million in projects were awarded in September 2008. Network partners have been working with agencies and elected officials to get the word out and are conducting application workshops around the state.

### > Educational Outreach Leads to Access to State Funds

NY Network partners educate elected officials whenever possible on the need for more bicycle and pedestrian facilities in New York that can be incorporated into SRTS efforts. This educational outreach inspired a State Assembly member to champion the cause and, independent of the NY Network, sponsor a bill, A2343-B, which would allow local governments to use the Department of Transportation’s \$39 million highway (Marchaselli) fund for bicycle and pedestrian path design, construction, land acquisition or ancillary uses. Marchaselli funds have historically been used only for road projects, but now can be used for SRTS bicycle and pedestrian projects near schools. The bill was passed by the state legislature, and was signed into law by the Governor in July 2008.

## Lessons Learned and Challenges

### > Sometimes it Takes Powerful Elected Officials

In New York, as in other states, advocates and agency staffers sometimes can’t get the attention of agency decision makers. A single phone call or letter from influential elected officials can make the difference. In New York, the support of state senators, representatives and the governor’s office helped get the \$27 million SRTS program launched, and helped get Complete Streets to be recognized as a transportation solution. The New York Network will continue to build and maintain relationships with elected officials throughout the state, and though State Networks do not lobby elected officials, the State Network will call upon them when necessary to encourage administrative policy action from public agencies.

**For more about the New York State Network, go to:**  
<http://www.saferoutespartnership.org/state/4373/newyork>



## Network Partners

**Lead Organization:** Oklahoma Bicycling Coalition

**Core Partners:** American Heart Association; Association of Central Oklahoma Governments; Council of Educational Facility Planners International; Indian Nation Council of Governments; Norman, OK Bicycle Committee; OK Fit Kids; Oklahoma City Planning Department; OK Department of Education; OK Department of Health -Injury Prevention; and -Physical Activity; and - Nutrition Program; OK Department of Transportation; OK Institute for Child Advocacy; OK Neighborhood Alliance; OK Parent –Teachers Association; Safe Kids OK; Schools for Healthy Lifestyles; Strong and Healthy Oklahoma.

## Accomplishments and Policy Changes

### > State Network is Advisory and Selection Committee

The OK State Network conducted extensive outreach to communities around the state, resulting in \$6.5 million in funding requests for the first cycle, more than doubling the \$3 million available. Work in this area will continue for the next application cycle that will begin in January 2009. The OK Network is also collaborating with the state Department of Transportation to ensure that grants awarded are implemented in a timely manner. The selection committee met for the first time on June 23, 2008 and meets monthly to complete the evaluation of applications. The DOT plans to announce the award recipients for Cycle 1 in November 2008.

### > Outreach and Training Promotes High Quality Programs

Several training presentations on the Oklahoma SRTS program have been made throughout the state, in order to effectively engage stakeholders at district, regional and statewide levels, and to increase the expertise of both regional Department of Transportation staff and local communities regarding program promotion, proposal preparation and review, and project implementation and evaluation. The OK Network also made presentations on the SRTS program and recommended state policy changes at the Oklahoma PTA Conference in July 2008 and at the statewide Fit Kids Coalition meeting in September 2008. The OK Network will present at the Safe and Healthy Schools Conference in November 2008, and the Oklahoma Elementary School Principals' Conference in January 2009.

### > Statewide Curriculum is Adopted

There reportedly was at one time a statewide curriculum for

teaching bicycle and pedestrian safety in Oklahoma's public elementary schools; however, the OK Network researched the policy and found no actual documentation of such a curriculum. The Network felt that before Oklahoma parents would be comfortable with their children walking and bicycling to school, there would need to be a credible program in place that would teach children how to safely and responsibly walk and bicycle. The nationally-recognized Texas *SuperCyclist* curriculum has been selected and adopted by the Department of Transportation for use in grades 4-5. An Action Team is currently reviewing the curriculum with the intent of removing Texas-specific language and inserting Oklahoma-specific language and language from the League of American Cyclists, a national leader in bicycle safety education. A curriculum from Human Relations Media – *Grades K- 4: Getting to School Safely* - will likely be used for the lower grades. The OK Network will now work with the Department of Education to have the selected curriculum adopted as part of physical education programs in the state's elementary schools. The likelihood of success has been significantly improved by the May 2008 signing of a bill that doubled the required PE time in grades K-5. The OK Network will work with Department of Transportation and the Department of Education to ensure that physical education teachers receive training to competently implement the curriculum, work with the Department of Transportation to incorporate the curriculum into the non-infrastructure portion of the state SRTS funding application process, and promote the curriculum to encourage schools and parents to embrace SRTS and generate a higher activity level among the students.

## Lessons Learned and Challenges

### > Downward Trends Create Challenges and Opportunities

Oklahoma continues to be listed as among the worst in the nation in almost every health, nutrition, and fitness category. These conditions create a challenge for the OK Network. However, more and more Oklahoma legislators and policy makers are joining in the fight to improve the state's standings. This should help the OK Network to promote the incorporation of SRTS into many state policy areas, in order to increase physical activity and health, and to help reduce childhood obesity in Oklahoma.

**For more about the Oklahoma State Network, go to:**  
<http://www.saferoutespartnership.org/state/4373/oklahoma>



Student Safety Patrols get kids across the street safely in Texas.

## Network Partners

**Lead Organization:** Texas Transportation Institute – Texas A&M University

**Core Partners:** American Diabetes Association; American Heart Association; Bowman-Melton Associates, Inc.; Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization; CATCH-University of Texas/School of Public Health; Governor’s Committee on People with Disabilities; Texas A&M University; Texas Bicycle Coalition; Texas Citizen Action; Texas Education Agency; Texas Department of Public Safety; Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS); Texas Municipal Police Association; Texas Parks and Wildlife Department; Texas PTA; Texas Recreation and Parks Society; Texas State Senate District 14; Texas Tech University Health Science Center; TxDOT – SRTS program; University of Texas School of Architecture.

## Accomplishments and Policy Changes

The Texas SRTS State Network officially launched in July 2008. The TX Network is currently researching policies in the state, including the status of the state SRTS program, Complete Streets, School Siting, Wellness Policies, and more. After ranking the policies in order of importance, the TX Network will create an Action Plan that will guide the Network’s activities.

The TX Network will also coordinate with the recent recipients of a \$2 million Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grant- Texas A&M University, Texas Health Institute and the University of Texas along with other members of Live Smart Texas, a statewide coalition of more than 80 organizations, including state agencies, policy institutes, academic institutions, community organizations and advocacy groups committed to eliminating childhood obesity in Texas. The grant-funded effort will evaluate two key obesity prevention policies, including Safe Routes to School.

## Lessons Learned and Challenges

### > Independence is Sometimes Key to Success

The Texas State SRTS Network attempted to launch in May 2007, by assimilating into one of several existing coalitions in the state that contains stakeholder organizations with similar goals and interests to the TX Network. However, it was discovered after several months of meetings and deliberations with these Texas coalitions that the amount of effort the TX State Network Project would require to accomplish its goals would overwhelm an already busy agenda for each of the existing groups.

Administrative delays and the time needed to transition to an independent network caused the Texas State Network Project to finally launch nearly one year after the initial attempt as an independent body that will coordinate with the other coalitions. The Texas State Network now boasts more than 25 partners, and is currently developing a policy Action Plan.

### For more about the Texas State Network, go to:

<http://www.saferoutespartnership.org/state/4373/texas>



Texas Walking School Bus arrives safely at school.





## Network Partners

**Lead Organization:** BikeWalk Virginia

**Network Chair:** Councilmember - the City of Alexandria

**Core Partners:** Anderson & Associates; Association for Community Choice in Transportation; Kubilins Transportation Group; SafeKids Virginia; Virginia Department of Education; Virginia Department of Health; Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles; Virginia Department of Transportation – SRTS program; Virginia PTA.

## Accomplishments and Policy Changes

### > Implementation of Virginia's Version of 'Complete Streets'

The Department of Transportation (VDOT) maintains all roads in Virginia except in cities and in two counties. The VA Network has been addressing two issues to strengthen the implementation of the VDOT *Policy for Integrating Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations* (similar to a Complete Streets policy). A VA State Network Action Team produced comments to the draft guidelines for Secondary Street Acceptance Requirements, which proposes to increase connectivity requirements for all future roads added into the VDOT road system, which would include roads near schools. Secondly, the formula for determining allocation of maintenance funds does not include bicycle lanes, causing the loss of tens of thousands of maintenance dollars for nearly every municipality in Virginia with bicycle lanes, including areas near schools. The Action Team is now researching whether the requirements are in Virginia's code, or whether they can be changed through administrative policy change.

### > State PTA Joins the Network

With the assistance of the VA Superintendent of Education, the VA Network was able to develop a partnership with the Virginia Parent Teacher Association (PTA) beginning in December 2007, and the VA Network now has the ability to reach out to parents across the state on SRTS issues. This has led to the development of a statewide SRTS publicity campaign in collaboration with the PTA. This partnership is proving fruitful in building long-term and broad support for SRTS throughout Virginia, and will facilitate future endeavors for policy change. The VA Network was invited to present at the PTA leadership conference in July 2008

with a panel of PTA leaders from across Virginia, promoting the benefits of establishing comprehensive SRTS programs. The VA Network is planning future efforts in collaboration with the Virginia PTA, including adding SRTS events to local PTA calendars, and presenting at the statewide PTA Convention in Roanoke, Virginia in November 2008.

### > Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Curriculum Developed

VA Network partners have collaborated on the development of a statewide curriculum that fits state Department of Education benchmarks. Titled *BikeSmart Virginia!*, this comprehensive bicycle training project provides technical assistance and resources to schools to integrate a unit of on-the-bike instruction as part of a school's health and physical education curriculum. This collaborative project includes VA Network partners the Virginia

Departments of Education, -Health, and -Motor Vehicles, and the non-profit BikeWalk Virginia. The next step for the VA Network will be to develop and advocate for the use of the *BikeSmart Virginia!* bicycle curriculum in Virginia DMV's driver education program, and to include bicycle and pedestrian safety instruction in driver's education classes in Virginia public schools.

## Lessons Learned and Challenges

### > Getting the State PTA and Department of Education on Board is Challenging

Efforts to recruit appropriate PTA and Department of Education professionals onto the VA Network were challenging and time-consuming, but well worth it, as these two groups are critical for the success of SRTS State Networks. The results from their participation have been immediate and dramatic. The Department of Education helped to bring the PTA on board, and now there are a number of SRTS-related initiatives being developed by the VA Network in collaboration with both groups related to outreach, curriculum and policy changes.

**For more about the Virginia State Network, go to:**  
<http://www.saferoutespartnership.org/state/4373/virginia>





## **Building Partnerships**

### ***State Networks build partnerships between agencies, departments, and stakeholders***

The Safe Routes to School State Network Project has demonstrated in its first year the effectiveness and need for convening government agencies, individuals and organizations to discuss and advocate for statewide policy changes that affect the ability of children to walk and bicycle to schools safely. Since Safe Routes to School is a program that involves engineering, education, encouragement, enforcement, and evaluation, the policies that affect the ability of children to walk or bicycle to schools also span these areas, and have community-wide impacts on childhood health, safety, and opportunities for physical activity. Having diverse partners ‘at the table’ through a State Network ensures that there are resources and expertise available to affect statewide policy change.

For instance, when considering a state’s school wellness policy, health and physical activity experts and advocates as well as professionals who understand the state’s educational system all need to participate in the conversation. Some partners to include in the wellness conversation are state Departments of Health and Education, bicycle, pedestrian, health and physical activity advocacy groups, the PTA state chapter, and representatives from the state’s wellness committee, if there is one. Even universities, medical professionals, nurses, teachers’ associations, SafeKids Coalition groups, state representatives from national advocacy groups such as the National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity, American Heart Association, or Alliance for a Healthier Generation, may also have an interest and applicable expertise, and may have already been involved in the establishment or review of a state wellness policy. Partners like these may have relationships with the policy decision-makers, and are often influential enough to generate policy change, especially as part of a coordinated effort from a diverse coalition of stakeholders. (See Louisiana - **School Wellness Policies Now Include SRTS** above)

## **Making Change**

### ***State Networks catalyze and affect important policy changes***

The techniques for policy change vary widely depending on circumstances and which partners are involved with the State Network on particular policy issues. In some cases, policy changes occur because a State Network partner has been involved in a

previous policy review process and knows that another review of the policy will be forthcoming. The partner then guides the State Network through the process, including planning a timeline, scheduling meetings with decision-makers, and producing a fact sheet or position paper on the subject, which is used to stimulate meetings or presentations with decision-makers to influence the policy change. An example of this process is the California school siting policy review (see California - **School Siting** above).

In other cases, the State Network meeting itself becomes a forum for discussion of new policies or of creative new approaches to resolving a policy issue, and State Network partners go back to their agencies or municipalities and institute the new policy. An example of this is in Illinois, where State Network partners learned about specific policy issues, then went back to their organizations and scheduled meetings to educate a prominent state elected official about the policy issue. Several times the elected official was inspired to create a new bill, which was introduced soon thereafter. Since State Networks do not lobby elected officials, State Networks will wait until a bill gets passed, then work to ensure that the new policy generated by the bill is implemented. (see Illinois - **Elected Officials are Agents of Change** above).

In some cases, policymakers who are State Network partners provide accurate information about the history of a policy, help the group communicate more effectively with a state agency, or help the State Network to reach decision-makers within the agency. A single phone call from a state-level legislator to an agency official can be as effective as, or more effective than, an intensive letter-writing or media campaign by multiple advocacy organizations. Having a powerful legislator as a partner or chair of a State Network also increases the status of the group and makes it easier to generate media attention and action by state agencies. (see District of Columbia - **Network Helps Prevent Delay** above)

## **Change Takes Many Forms**

### ***Some policies are proactive, some are reactive***

The State Network Project has been successful in creating new policies, improving existing policies, and even preventing bad policies from being formed or continuing. The most dramatic examples are within the state departments of transportation. The ten State Networks each placed as a top priority the implementation of the federal SRTS program since this program is the most important source of funding and influence in the US at this time. In some states the SRTS program is administered well, featuring diverse advisory committees, well-developed



application processes, and a robust training and outreach effort to local communities. In those states, the State Network tends to be a strong partner with the SRTS state DOT program, sometimes even serving as the SRTS advisory committee (Illinois, DC, Oklahoma), and the application selection committee (DC, Oklahoma).

But in other states the SRTS program is not a priority program within the department of transportation. As a result, the program has not been launched in a timely manner, and has been developed without stakeholder input or even robust outreach or trainings to local communities. In these cases, the State Network has focused on assisting the state DOT in getting the program up and running, and helping it to become effective when launched. This reactive approach has been necessary in several of our Network states, and has been invaluable in ensuring that these important federal SRTS program dollars are utilized successfully.

## Show Me More Money

*Networks are leveraging hundreds of millions of dollars*

Safe Routes to School State Networks are affecting change in at least eight policy areas, each of which influences millions of dollars in federal and/or state funds. The State Networks in ten states influence the spending of \$226,622,530 in federal SRTS program funds (SAFETEA-LU/2005-2009), along with tens of millions in state SRTS funds in California. The State Networks also influence the spending of other federal funds, including Highway Safety Improvement Program/Strategic Highway Safety Plan funds, and other state and local funding, including traffic fines (DC), road maintenance funds (Virginia), green building and school siting (Illinois), and crossing guard and drivers education program funds (Virginia), to name a few.

State Networks are influencing agencies, elected officials and even local municipalities to make changes to their policies, or institute new ones, each of which affects the spending of public funds. State Networks are leveraging millions of dollars that affect traffic safety, education, public health and infrastructure in the ten states in which SRTS State Networks operate. And through national conference presentations, printed reports, tools such as the SRTS National Partnership's *Establishing a Safe Routes to School State Network: A 10-Step Guide*, a website ([saferoutespartnership.org](http://saferoutespartnership.org)) featuring pages on every state in the US, and meetings with national groups and elected officials, the influence of State Networks is reaching far beyond the initial ten states. State Networks are influencing advocates and agencies in other states

and indirectly leveraging funds and inspiring advocates to form networks. State Networks are also refocusing existing coalitions, such as Be Active New York State.

## Every State Needs a SRTS State Network

*Networks Build Partnerships, Leverage Resources and Improve Policies*

Even though the ten State Networks are influencing other states, there is a need for formal SRTS State Networks in all fifty states and DC. Advocates and agencies in many states are interested in establishing a state network, but most lack the capacity to do so effectively without dedicated multi-year funding. The early success of the SRTS State Network Project shows the value of having paid organizers who can be counted on to manage the development and maintenance of a statewide coalition that includes key state agencies and dozens of organizations as its partners. Also, since the State Network Project was launched in 2007, the value of having a coalition of experts and stakeholders has been made clear. The federal SRTS program alone is a \$612 million program, and many states are struggling to administer and spend these funds in an effective way – State Networks can help. In many states, issues such as school siting or highway safety programs are guided by multi-million dollar policies that affect every citizen in the state, but too often, the policies do not represent bicycling, walking, or children getting to school actively – State Networks can help. Other policies such as school wellness, bicycle and pedestrian safety curriculum, Complete Streets, and school siting can also be influential to the lives of millions of students and families, but states generally lack expertise in these areas – State Networks can help.

The first year of the Safe Routes to School State Network Project has shown that the State Network Project is not only important for ensuring the effective expenditure of hundreds of millions of dollars in existing federal funds, but that it can also lead to new funding sources, leverage existing state and local funding, and improve the health and safety of children, families and communities throughout states. By bringing experts and stakeholders together and tackling tough issues that may have never been addressed before, or are in need of a fresh approach, the SRTS State Network Project has begun to break down policy barriers and increase the ability of Safe Routes to School programs and other statewide policies to change the habits of an entire generation.



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