

NEWS RELEASE



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Public Health Awarded Grants from the State to Address Traffic Safety

California Office of Traffic Safety Recognizes Importance of Investing in LA County Efforts to Curb Unintended Accidents and Deaths Among Youth and Adults

LOS ANGELES –The California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) awarded three grants totaling \$561,500 to the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (Public Health) Division of Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention to support and promote traffic safety in communities with high rates of vehicle collisions. Funding will help low-income families properly install and use child safety seats, improve bicycle safety in underserved areas of the region, and reduce teen distracted driving.

The goals of these OTS grants emphasize traffic safety and align with Public Health’s injury prevention efforts in child passenger safety and driver protection, and with the County of Los Angeles’s Vision Zero Initiative, which seeks to eliminate motor vehicle collision fatalities on unincorporated roadways to zero by 2035.

Grant funds will support activities that improve traffic safety including:

- Car Seat Safety Clinics that demonstrate how to install car seats and offer free car seats to families in need.
- Evidence-based, virtual workshops on road safety for teens and newly licensed drivers in LA County.
- Bicycle and pedestrian education classes geared toward adults in the unincorporated communities of East Los Angeles and Florence Firestone, and the distribution of bicycle headlights, taillights, and helmets.

“There are many neighborhoods in LA County that do not benefit equally from infrastructure that protects both cyclists and pedestrians and slows down traffic,” said Barbara Ferrer, PhD, MPH, MEd, Director of Public Health. “These challenges put people at risk when they walk or bike on busy streets that may be their only way to get from point A to point B. These grants allow Public Health to continue to support families and residents with resources and education to keep themselves safe from vehicle injury.”

“Education is one of many important tools that collectively work to make sure everyone, regardless of how they travel, reaches their destination safely,” said OTS Director Barbara Rooney, “Furthermore, eliminating the financial burden for low-income families by providing free car seats helps every child in the community ride safely.”

In Los Angeles County, vehicle collisions are the leading cause of death for children between the ages of 5 to 14, the second leading cause of death for youth between the ages of 15 to 24, and the fourth leading cause of premature death overall among LA County residents. The OTS grants will enable Public Health to educate adults and young people on traffic safety and how to reduce preventable vehicle collisions.

The grant program will run through September 30, 2023. Funding for these programs was provided by the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

The Department of Public Health is committed to promoting health equity and ensuring optimal health and well-being for all 10 million residents of Los Angeles County. Through a variety of programs, community partnerships and services, Public Health oversees environmental health, disease control, and community and family health. Nationally accredited by the Public Health Accreditation Board, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health comprises of more than 5,000 employees and has an annual budget of \$1.3 billion.

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*Los Angeles County Department of Public Health works to protect health,
prevent disease, and promote health and well-being.*