



Campaign Nitty Gritty

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL STAFFING



CORE IDEA

Paid staff is one of the most important elements for a strong Safe Routes to School program. For a program to be effectively administered, reach a lot of children, and be sustainable in the long term, it needs paid full-time staff.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SECURE STAFFING FOR A SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PROGRAM?



Programs with at least one full-time staff with benefits dedicated specifically to Safe Routes to School are more effective.

AT THE LOCAL LEVEL, paid staff enables Safe Routes to School programs to do the following:

- **Programming:** Conduct education and engagement events and activities, run Walk to School Day and Bike to School Day, develop messaging and curricula, provide student educational activities, operate walking school buses and bike trains, or host or weekly walk or roll days.
- **Key administrative coordinating activities:** Find leaders at each school, organize city or district task forces, and act as a liaison between stakeholders. For re-granting programs, coordinators can provide application assistance to high-need communities.
- **Efficiency and alignment:** Coordinate efforts between aligned policy priorities, like Vision Zero and Complete Streets. Identify opportunities to align Safe Routes to School infrastructure projects with ongoing city efforts like repaving and stormwater management.
- **Identify infrastructure needs and opportunities:** Help identify and prioritize needed Safe Routes to School infrastructure projects using an array of tactics, from leading walk audits, to coordinating with city planners and traffic engineers, to advocating to city decisionmakers. Staff can help leverage other sources of funding (for example, Capital Improvement Plans) for Safe Routes to School projects.

Local priorities and resources mean that different coordinators may allocate their time differently among these tasks, but focusing on these different areas of work is essential for an effective program.

AT THE STATE LEVEL, paid staff enables Safe Routes to School programs to do the following:

- **Administer funding:** Make sure that Safe Routes to School funding is accessible and oversee competitions to award funding to local projects and programs.
- **Serve as a liaison:** Connect school systems and transportation professionals to meet mutual goals of safe, efficient student travel.
- **Provide technical assistance:** Support local implementation of successful initiatives by providing technical assistance and help with funding applications.
- **Develop tools and resources:** Internally develop or manage external consultants to develop traffic safety education materials and marketing materials that encourage kids to walk and bike to school.
- **Program evaluation:** Assess where funding is awarded, how program affects rates of injury, fatality physical activity, absenteeism, and more.

KEY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LOCAL AND STATE SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PROGRAMS

State Safe Routes to School programs are typically re-granting programs, issuing funds to local communities to run programs and build infrastructure. Whereas locally, cities and counties run the educational and encouragement programming and build infrastructure to improve safe walking and bicycling themselves.

Sample Policy Language: Local Level



SARATOGA, CA

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of Saratoga directs the City Manager to designate a member of City staff as the Safe Routes to School Coordinator;

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HOW DO I JUSTIFY THIS?

Programs administered by governments need staffing in order to function effectively.

- State DOT Safe Routes to School coordinators and other staff play an important role in making sure that Safe Routes to School funding is accessible, liaising between school systems and transportation professionals, and providing technical assistance to schools and communities.
- Some local Safe Routes to School programs are run by volunteer coordinators, but 2016 research shows that programs run by paid staff are most effective – both in terms of requisite skills and program sustainability.

Safe Routes to School coordinators exist in communities all across the country.

- 2019 research on local Safe Routes to School programs found that there are over 140 full time paid coordinators and another 140 part-time Safe Routes to School coordinators.
- 2020 research shows that sixteen states have at least two FTE's that focus on Safe Routes to School and 11 have at least one FTE focused on Safe Routes to School. About half of states provide technical assistance or a statewide resource center that supports local Safe Routes to School programs.



HOW DO I DO THIS?

- At a minimum, one full-time position dedicated to Safe Routes to School is required. Programs serving more students or providing more depth likely need more than one staff person.
- State Safe Routes to School coordinators are usually housed within state departments of transportation, but states can also choose to hire a consultant or fund a Safe Routes to School coordinator at a nonprofit or other state department such as health.
- Local Safe Routes to School coordinators are commonly housed within municipal departments of transportation or school districts, but can also work within departments of health.
- Safe Routes to School coordinator salaries can be paid for by federal Transportation Alternatives Program funding. All states receive an apportionment of these funds. For more information about these funds:
https://www.saferoutespartnership.org/sites/default/files/resource_files/tap_funding_infographic.pdf.

Sample Policy Language: State Level

HAWAII

(b) There is created, within the department of transportation, the position of safe routes to school program coordinator. The safe routes to school program coordinator shall provide a central point of contact for the federal safe routes to school program.” In addition to the coordinator within the state DOT, county-level Safe Routes to School coordinator positions are required for program implementation.

(e) Implementation of the county safe routes to school program shall take into consideration the need to:

- (1) Fill a permanent, full-time position of safe routes to school coordinator within the county designated office;

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MORE INFO

- <https://www.saferoutespartnership.org/resources/toolkit/building-momentum-safe-routes-school>
- <https://www.saferoutespartnership.org/resources/report/srts-census-project>
- <https://www.saferoutespartnership.org/resources/2020-state-report-map>