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Press Office

US Department of
Transportation
1200 New Jersey
Ave, SE
Washington, DC
20590
United States

Email:

[pressoffice@dot.g](mailto:pressoffice@dot.gov)

[OV](#) 

INVESTING IN AMERICA: Biden-Harris Administration Announces More Than \$1 Billion in Grants for 350+ Communities to Make Local Roads Safer

Thursday, September 5, 2024

As students head back to school, new round of funding from President Biden's infrastructure law will make America's roads safer for everyone, including pedestrians, cyclists, and those living in rural communities

Announcement is paired with release of NHTSA's early estimates on traffic fatalities for first half of 2024, showing a 3.2 percent decline compared to the same period in 2023

Washington, D.C. – Today, U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg announced more than **\$1 billion** in grants through President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law for the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) program. The funding will go directly to 354 local, regional, and tribal communities to improve roadway safety and prevent deaths and serious injuries on America's rural and urban roads, including some of the most dangerous in the country.

Today's announcement – a key component of DOT's comprehensive National Roadway Safety Strategy launched in 2022 – is paired with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's release of its early estimates of traffic fatalities for the first half of 2024, estimating that **traffic fatalities declined for the ninth straight quarter**. An estimated 18,720 people died in motor vehicle traffic crashes, a decrease of about 3.2 percent as compared to 19,330 fatalities projected to have occurred in the first half of 2023. Fatalities declined in both the first and second quarters of 2024.

Even with road fatalities decreasing over the past nine quarters straight, they remain far too high. Over 40,000 people have died on U.S. roads in each of the last three years, and a disproportionate number of people are

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killed in rural areas or while walking or bicycling. Additionally, traffic fatalities remain a leading cause of death for school-aged children and young adults.

“Through new funding programs like Safe Streets and Roads for All, the Biden-Harris Administration is helping communities of all sizes make their roadways safer for everyone who uses them,” said **U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg**. “We should be energized by the fact that together we’ve reduced traffic fatalities for more than two years in a row now – but so much work remains to fully address the crisis on our roads. Today’s roadway safety grants will deliver funding directly to 354 communities and continue the important work we’re doing to reduce traffic fatalities to the only number that’s acceptable: zero.”

“The SS4A program gives local and tribal governments the resources to plan and implement the safety improvements that will make the most difference in their communities,” said **U.S. Transportation Deputy Secretary Polly Trottenberg**. “They know what is best, and this program leverages that local expertise to save lives.”

The Safe Streets and Roads for All program provides grants directly to communities for implementation, planning, and demonstration projects aimed at preventing deaths and serious injuries on the nation’s roadways. Since launching in 2022, SS4A has funded projects in more than 1,400 communities, supporting roadway safety for nearly 75% of the U.S. population.

Additionally, SS4A is making historic investments in rural and underserved communities, and many of this year’s awards will address critical safety hot spots on some of the country’s most dangerous roads. The projects and activities aim to improve safety for all roadway users, including drivers, passengers, pedestrians and students heading back to school, bicyclists, transit users, and people with disabilities.

With this round of announced awards:

- Rural communities comprise around half of all SS4A grant award recipients to date.
- 682 SS4A communities (43% of award recipients) have populations under 50,000.

- 793 SS4A award recipients (50% of all recipients to date) were new direct Federal funding recipients to USDOT.
- Over half of SS4A funds will benefit underserved communities, providing equitable investment to places that need funding the most.

View a fact sheet on today's awards [here](#). Communities and projects being awarded funding this round include:

School Safety

- The County of Los Angeles, California, was awarded \$29.8 million to implement safety improvements at 77 intersections, all of which experience higher-than-average rates of pedestrian fatalities and severe injuries. More than 90% of the project's locations are near schools and commercial areas that attract high levels of pedestrian activity.
- The City of Palm Bay, Florida, was awarded \$2.4 million to construct a 6-foot sidewalk along the east side of Emerson Drive near two schools to improve pedestrian safety. This sidewalk will be complemented by additional data-driven safety improvements, including a pedestrian hybrid beacon, merge lane removal, and crosswalks with rectangular rapid-flashing beacons, which increase yield rates by up to 98%. The project corridor is adjacent to several local schools and sees nearly 200 pedestrians and bicyclists before and after school hours.
- Knoxville, Tennessee's Community Development Corporation was awarded \$1.7 million to pilot a Safe Routes to School program, which will incentivize parents to lead bike trains and expand the existing walking school bus program; test signalized crosswalks near a new Head Start facility and elementary school; and pilot intersection improvements at a high-incident intersection near a school bus stop by improving site lines, pedestrian crossings, and vehicle speeds.

Rural Communities

- The Board of County Road Commissioners of the County of Kalamazoo, Michigan, was awarded \$25 million to significantly improve safety for all road users and eliminate fatalities and serious injuries in the county by implementing low-cost, high-impact, evidence-based lane departure and vulnerable road user strategies over a wide geographic area covering more than 130 miles of primary

roadways—most of which are rural. There were 74 fatalities and 30 serious injuries on the project roads over the past five years, more than half of which were due to roadway departure.

- Southwest MN EMS Corp was awarded \$9.9 million to implement a regional tele-EMS system to expedite access to definitive trauma care after an injury-causing traffic crash occurs and support staffing viability for rural health system and volunteer EMS agencies across 18 Minnesota counties. This project provides 54 EMS agencies access to Avel eCare services, which allows certified physicians, paramedics, and nurses to instruct, advise, and coordinate patient care, improving and expediting post-crash care in an area with no Level I or II Trauma Centers.
- The Town of Boiling Springs, North Carolina, was awarded \$483,000 to conduct demonstration projects on roads in the downtown core and at intersections, including bringing crossing signs into compliance as rectangular rapid flashing beacons, programming leading pedestrian intervals at intersections to give pedestrians a head start, and installing an engineered rubber curb to create a narrower roadway that reduces speeds and improves safety.

Tribal Communities

- The Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana was awarded \$20.3 million for the reconstruction of Powell Road, a two-lane rural collector that serves as the main access to the Coushatta tribal community and administration. It is a high crash corridor plagued by issues with roadway alignment, site distance, signage that is often missing or improperly located, absent pavement marking, and insufficient recovery areas.
- The Blackfeet Tribe of the Blackfeet Reservation in Montana was awarded \$3.2 million to support the Blackfeet Comprehensive Action Plan including safety measures to add crosswalks and sidewalks, movable speed signage, movable speed bumps, additional lighting, pilot safe transit stops, pilot wheelchair accessibility improvements, and dynamic crossing lights.
- The Navajo Nation Division of Transportation in Arizona was awarded \$1.6 million to conduct education and public information campaigns that will inform the Navajo DOT Action Plan, including using mapping technology to develop and test the effectiveness of the effort to

produce data-based behavior change among tribal members and the general public that traverse tribal lands.

Innovative Approaches

- The Emerald Coast Regional Council in Florida was awarded \$10 million to deploy innovative technological improvements and evaluate the safety impact of Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) technological improvements on two of Pensacola's high cash rate segments. The safety benefits of the ITS improvements will be monitored to determine if the ITS infrastructure would provide significant benefit to other urban areas within Pensacola and the ECRC region, more broadly.
- The University of California, San Diego was awarded \$2.2 million for its Training Research and Education for Driving Safety Center (TREDS) to deploy AI-supported roadside cameras to identify prevalence of risky behaviors and evaluate the effectiveness of roadside-targeted messaging.
- The City of Alabaster, Alabama, was awarded \$269,952 to utilize TRAINFO Crossing Prediction Solution System (TRAINFO) technology, which will reduce vehicle vulnerability to active rail crossings by reducing motorist delays and emergency responder delays caused by blocked rail crossings. The TRAINFO technology will re-route drivers around blocked rail crossings and adjust traffic signals in real-time to manage traffic congestion.

Local Governments

- The City of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, was awarded \$25 million for planning, design, and construction of Complete Streets interventions on two miles of Center Street, a heavily used corridor that is characterized by wide travel lanes, unprotected bike lanes, and underutilized parking lanes that many drivers use to recklessly pass on the right. This segment has elevated rates of crashes involving pedestrians and bicyclists and the project area is completely within disadvantaged census tracts.
- The City of Memphis, Tennessee, was awarded \$13.1 million to make significant improvements on a high-injury corridor at a six-way intersection, one of the most dangerous in the city. This complex intersection at Lamar Avenue, Kimball Avenue, and Pendleton Street

has a confusing array of signals, fading and disjointed pedestrian connectivity, and little guidance on appropriate movements.

- The City of New Haven, Connecticut, was awarded \$11 million to implement safety improvements along a 1.6-mile segment of Chapel Street, a key urban corridor connecting downtown with disadvantaged communities. The Chapel Street corridor is located within the City's High Injury Network (HIN) and accounts for its most dangerous city-owned street. Pedestrian and bicyclist safety is one of the biggest challenges, and 50% of vulnerable road user crashes lead to a serious injury or fatality. The project area includes the street with the highest number of killed or seriously injured (KSI) crashes per mile of all city streets.
- The City of Savannah, Georgia, was awarded \$9.9 million to improve safety on 37th Street, which serves as a gateway to downtown and midtown Savannah and connects people to major business corridors in the city. The 37th Street corridor has seen a dramatic rise in crashes since 2020 and is one of the city's highest risk roadways with a high number of intersections and turning crashes involving pedestrian fatalities. Fifteen intersections will be upgraded with updated signals, dedicated left turns, sidewalks, crosswalks, and extended bicycle lanes.
- The City of Kansas City, Missouri, was awarded \$10 million to implement safety countermeasures on Prospect Avenue, which is on Kansas City's high-injury network and is one of the most dangerous corridors in the city for pedestrians, with reckless driving and speeding as key causal factors. This project implements sidewalk and bus stop improvements, pedestrian refuge islands, curb extensions, retroreflective backplates, and pedestrian and street-level lighting, concentrating safety measures on the most dangerous 1.86-mile section of Prospect Avenue.

View the full list of FY24 SS4A awards – round one and two – [here](#).

The third and final round of this year's SS4A grant awards is expected to be announced in November. [View more information on the SS4A program](#).

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
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