

NEWS RELEASE



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Public Health Awarded Grants From the State of California to Address Traffic Safety

Grant Awards Recognize the Importance of Investing in Efforts to Create Streets and Walkable Communities to Encourage Physical Activity and Protect Resident Safety

The California Office of Traffic Safety awarded three grants totaling \$909,111 to the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health's (Public Health) Division of Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention. These grants will support and promote traffic safety in communities with high rates of vehicle collisions. This will be achieved by improving bicycle safety in underserved areas of the region, increasing pedestrian safety among populations such as older adults, and reducing distracted driving among teens. Additionally, funding will help families properly install and use child safety seats.

These grants align with Public Health's injury prevention efforts in pedestrian and child passenger safety and with the Los Angeles County's Vision Zero Initiative, which seeks to eliminate vehicle collision related fatalities on unincorporated roadways by 2035.

Funding will support:

- Clinics that demonstrate how to install car seats and offer free car seats to families in need.
- Workshops on road safety for teens and newly licensed drivers.
- Bicycle and pedestrian safety education programs in East Los Angeles and Florence Firestone and its expansion into Westmont, West Athens, Willowbrook, and West Rancho Dominguez. This initiative includes safety classes geared toward adults, community bike rides and walks, safety presentations to local organizations, and the distribution of bicycle headlights, taillights, and helmets.
- Development of a "Safe Routes for Seniors" program to increase older adults' safety and efficacy in navigating their community on foot, with a mobility device (walkers, canes, wheelchairs), or through public transit.

"There are many neighborhoods in Los Angeles County that do not benefit equally from infrastructure that protects both cyclists and pedestrians and slows down traffic," said Dr. Barbara Ferrer, Ph.D., M.P.H., M.Ed., Director of the Los Angeles County Department 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 our support of families and residents, providing them with resources and education to keep them safe from vehicle injury."

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 county residents.

These grant-funded efforts will run through September 30th, 2024. 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.*