



2021



ANNUAL REPORT

Message from the Senior Staff of Safe Routes Partnership

As communities emerged from the most acute phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, our commitment to advancing safe active travel for kids to and from school took on new meaning in 2021: **Socially-connected, Active Future for Everyone**, with SAFE routes connecting kids to learning, to health, and to each other again. As the national “home” for the Safe Routes to School movement, our work in 2021 centered around shoring up federal funding and policy to grow Safe Routes to School; supporting kids, communities, schools, and Safe Routes to School champions to use active travel to school as a core component of the return back to in-person learning; and using the lived experiences of inequity and injustice experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic to continue to make the case for prioritizing communities that have been under-invested in and disinvested from. In this annual report, we are pleased to share highlights from our work this year to create socially-connected, active, equitable communities.



A young child is riding a red bicycle in the rain. The child is wearing a red and black helmet, a grey hoodie, and blue jeans. A dark backpack is on their back. The bicycle has 'RABBIT RACER' written on the handlebars. The background is blurred, showing a person and some foliage. The rain is visible as white streaks throughout the scene.

Advancing Policy and Advocacy



Federal Policy

The primary opportunity to establish policy and secure funding to support and promote Safe Routes to School, walking, and bicycling at the federal level is the surface transportation bill, which gets reauthorized every five years. After a one-year extension of the prior five-year bill's policy and funding levels, Congress passed a bipartisan reauthorization in 2021. In partnership with the League of American Bicyclists, and drawing upon long-term relationships with Senate and House offices, we were able to secure major policy wins and funding increases to advance Safe Routes to School, walking, and bicycling.

In the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021, we achieved a 60 percent increase in Transportation Alternatives Program funding (a \$2.5 billion increase over the next five years) and policy changes to address the accessibility and equity of the program, including requiring states to define and prioritize “high-need” communities in awarding Transportation Alternatives funds, creating flexibilities for the local match requirement, which often deters small and low-resource communities from pursuing these funds, and requiring that states hold a competition before transferring funds out of the program. For Safe Routes to School, we won an expansion of the program to include high schools, as well as codified the program into current law and affirmed eligibility for Safe Routes to School throughout surface transportation formula programs.

We made strides toward incorporating the safety of people walking, bicycling, and using mobility devices into traditional highway safety programs. States are now required to complete safety assessments focused on keeping “vulnerable road users” (non-motor vehicle road users) safe from injury and fatality and, if vulnerable road users comprise 15 percent or more of a state's traffic fatalities, the state must spend at least 15 percent of its safety funds on projects that keep vulnerable road users safety, resulting in an additional \$200 million on improvements like sidewalks, bike lanes, crosswalks, and more. We celebrate these victories and turn toward raising awareness of these changes and tracking implementation.

Regional & State Policy

Safe Routes Partnership's policy managers in the Pacific Northwest and California work to advance healthy, equitable transportation options. Our policy managers collaborate with partners to ensure regional and state funding and policies support active transportation long-term. At the same time, our policy managers are trusted resources for local communities, helping them navigate government processes and secure funding for walking, rolling, and Safe Routes to School projects.

In the Pacific Northwest, we were a core partner of the Getting There Together Coalition, a multicultural, multigenerational coalition focused on the greater Portland, Oregon region that centers and uplifts the voices and needs of people most impacted by transportation inequities through education, advocacy, access, and leadership. Through the Getting There Together Coalition, our policy manager reached out to and engaged community members and elected officials about shifting transportation funding priorities to address regional disparities.

In California, we successfully supported legislation (AB 43), which will allow local agencies and Caltrans much more flexibility to set speed limits lower than 25 miles per hour, and in some cases will require them to consider safety for cyclists and pedestrians in doing so.



California Active Transportation Program

We provide ongoing support to communities applying for funding from the California Active Transportation Program (ATP) - the state's largest funding source for walking and rolling projects. Our analysis of the previous (2020) cycle helped identify trends: large projects (greater than \$10 million) continued to make up a disproportionate portion of the funded projects; applicants are opting for bolder treatments in their project scopes that are more likely to significantly boost safety and mode shift, though with the cumulative effect that the funds available in the program are exhausted more quickly; combined Infrastructure/Non-Infrastructure applications continued to outperform stand-alone Infrastructure applications across project sizes, confirming our belief that such collaborations are a best practice; and the increasing competitiveness seems to have had affected rural constituencies disproportionately and we have anecdotally seen this start to discourage small agencies from applying in the first place. Informed by this analysis, our advocacy and technical assistance work to ensure communities with the greatest needs can access this critical funding program and we recruited our next cohort of five ATP technical assistance communities that will apply for funding in 2022.

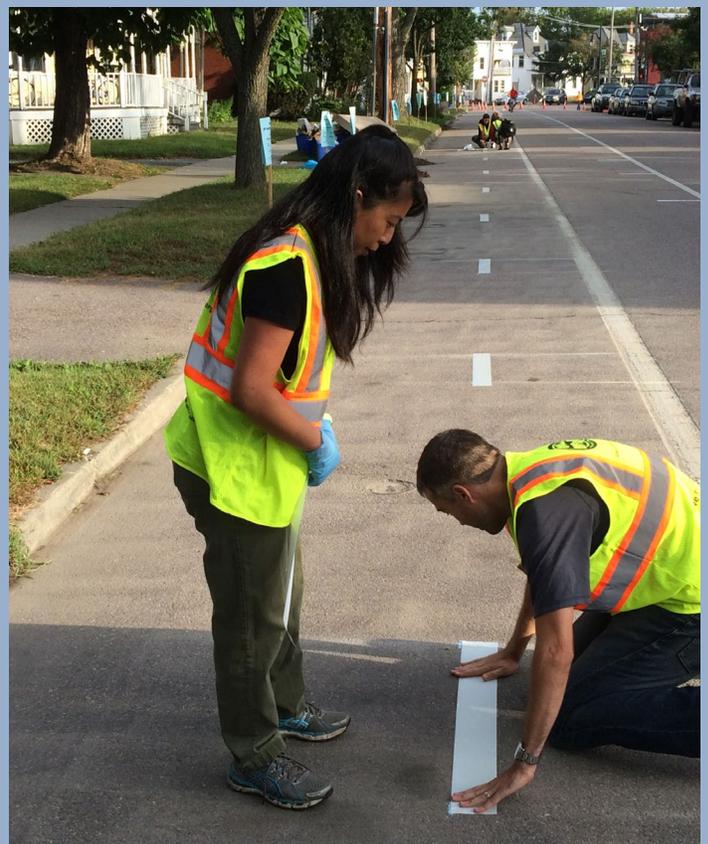


Investing in Health, Safety, and Mobility: A Report on State Funding for Walking, Bicycling, and Safe Routes to School

The places we live and the ways we get around are shaped by a series of intentional policy and funding decisions. Those decisions are not random; they are influenced by people who are subject to individual and societal pressures and biases. We published a report that analyzes the amounts of funding each state dedicates to walking, bicycling, and Safe Routes to School and the source of those funds. Case studies and suggestions are provided for how states can develop funding streams that are dedicated to walking, bicycling, and/or Safe Routes to School.

State Funding Strategies

Our State and Local Funding Strategies Workgroup is a monthly virtual gathering that brings together active transportation organizations and advocates working to increase state and local funding for walking and bicycling. We have been meeting since 2016 with a mission to develop an understanding of the national active transportation financing landscape for state and local campaigns and create a networking and peer learning locus for developing and sharing best practices. Each month, we gather to share updates on our work and learn from a guest speaker who dives into topics like state-specific legislative updates, funding programs, equity considerations, and campaign strategies. We discuss not just the “what” of state and local funding, but also the “how”— lessons learned, effective (or ineffective) strategies, and the tips advocates can share with others pursuing similar work.



Supporting Safe Routes to School

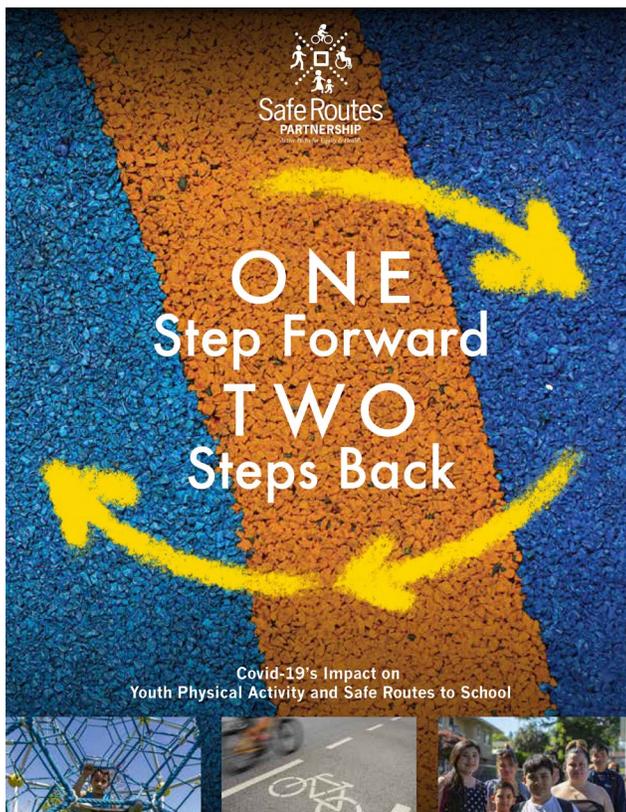




Safe Routes Back 2 School

The return to school for the 2021-2022 school year focused on safe walking, rolling and so much more! Together we worked to make a **S**ocially-connected, **A**ctive **F**uture for **E**veryone, with SAFE routes connecting kids to learning, to health, and each other again. Through our SAFE Routes Back 2 School campaign, we launched four resource releases from June to September providing key messaging, real-time resources, and Zoom discussion sessions to prepare our field for the return to school. The SAFE Routes Back 2 School campaign's future-focused efforts supported the social connections and physical activity our kids needed to be ready to learn.





One Step Forward, Two Steps Back

One year into the COVID-19 pandemic, we began to understand the toll taken on people’s physical activity and health. Some Americans were able to take advantage of working and learning from home, spending more time outdoors, and walking or biking in their neighborhood, but that was not the case for everyone. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed what research had long shown – not all communities, people, or places have the same access to safe places to recreate or to walk and wheel close to home and to everyday destinations. Our report, *“One Step Forward, Two Steps Back: COVID-19’s Impact on Youth Physical Activity and Safe Routes to School,”* helps paint a picture of how COVID-19 impacted physical activity for youth and families.

Why Safe Routes to School is an Essential Part of Reopening

During the COVID-19 pandemic, students, families, schools, and other community members have dealt with fear, isolation, and endless attempts to be creative in challenging situations. Faced with the new challenge of dealing with the chaos of returning to “normal” as schools re-open, Safe Routes to School programs would encounter a plethora of daunting challenges. This resource outlines some of the challenges that have either surfaced because of or were exacerbated by the pandemic and talking points to outline how Safe Routes to School programs can provide the tools to address some of those concerns. While Safe Routes to School cannot solve every problem, it can address some significant health and safety challenges while enabling easier access to community destinations and resources that fill other gaps. With thoughtfulness and creativity, we can help communities thrive in this period of transition.



Why Safe Routes to School is an Essential Part of Reopening: Talking Points for Safe Routes Back to School 2021

During the pandemic, students, families, schools, and other community members have dealt with fear, isolation, and endless attempts to be creative in challenging situations. Now, we are faced with a new challenge: dealing with the chaos of returning to “normal.” As schools re-open, there will be a plethora of daunting challenges. Below is an outline of some of the challenges that have either surfaced because of or were exacerbated by the pandemic and talking points to outline how Safe Routes to School can provide the tools to address some of those concerns. While Safe Routes to School cannot solve every problem, it can address some significant health and safety challenges while enabling easier access to community destinations and resources that fill other gaps. With thoughtfulness and creativity, we can help communities thrive in this period of transition.

COVID-19 Has Taken a Toll on Our Communities and Our Kids

During the pandemic, kids lost access to places and activities (both in and out of school) where they could find social connections and physical activity. This took a serious toll, especially on the most vulnerable populations. For everyone, the sustained periods of stress and fear brought on by the pandemic have contributed to a collective and individual trauma. Keeping that in mind, it makes sense that moving into a new school year may be challenging and everyone involved will require more support than they did pre-pandemic.

The Health and Academic Impacts of Isolation and Remote Learning

Learning loss has been a growing concern as students learning remotely have struggled to stay engaged in a virtual classroom, but there is also significant concern around physical and mental health because of students’ isolation. This is particularly acute for the many families coping with significant stress levels during the pandemic, from fear of contracting and recovering from the virus to financial, housing, and food insecurities.

- Parents of students learning remotely or in hybrid models were more likely than parents of students learning in-person to report that their children experienced decreased physical activity, time spent outdoors, time with friends, and worsened mental or emotional health.¹
- Nearly three-quarters of parents polled in a national survey shared that they were concerned about their children’s learning loss during the pandemic due to virtual learning.² That same poll showed that the vast majority of parents in the United States are concerned about the toll remote learning has taken on their children’s physical and mental wellbeing.³



2021
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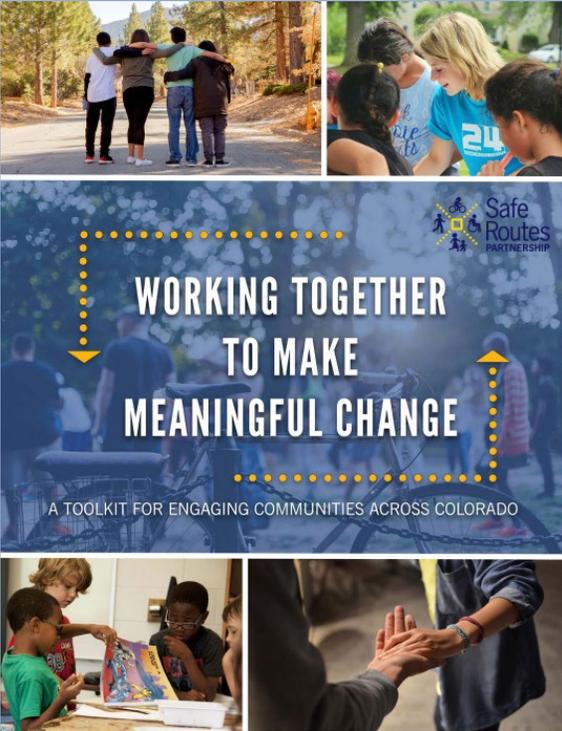


Safe Routes to School
BACK TO SCHOOL MESSAGING GUIDE



Back to School Messaging Guide

With the increase in students returning to in-person learning for the 2021-2022 school year, Safe Routes Partnership worked to prepare Safe Routes to School programs to be ready to engage students, parents, teachers, and administrators on the benefits of Safe Routes to School. The Back to School Messaging Guide contains sample social media posts, templates for social media graphics, and promotional flyers to help effectively communicate and market Safe Routes to School programs.



Working Together to Make Meaningful Change

When community engagement works well, it can lead to tangible changes that improve the lives of community members, including an increased sense of belonging and social connectedness, which improves the overall health and livability of the community. “Working Together to Make Meaningful Change” was created in partnership with the Colorado Department of Transportation specifically for communities in Colorado and offers a walk-through of each step of an engagement framework centering community members at the heart of the process. It begins with a reflection on the role of community partners and the impact on community members, then builds an understanding of the community by conducting community research. That is followed by guidance on how to leverage partnerships in your community engagement and concludes with creative ideas for engagement activities and strategies for sustaining community engagement long-term. Each section links to additional resources and a series of guiding questions to help improve the practice of community engagement.

A Place It! Guide to Safe Routes to Schools

Talking about ideas versus building ideas with our hands can generate radically different results. When we use our hands to build ideas, we activate parts of our brain that are less regulatory and more responsible for emotions, allowing for creative ideas to flow forth. We collaborated with James Rojas of Place It! and John Kemp of Prairieform to host a training on how to creatively engage students, caregivers, staff, and teachers around Safe Routes to School. Building off the training, “*A Place It! Guide to Safe Routes to Schools*” equips you with the tools to engage students, families, and staff of all backgrounds in imagining, designing, and building more walkable and roll-able routes to school. This guide covers everything from why it’s important to engage people with their hands (as opposed to simply talking about Safe Routes to School), to materials needed, to outcomes, and where they can lead. It also looks at how you can adapt the Place It! workshop method to different audiences and environments.





Houston Safe Routes to School Webinars Series

The Safe Routes Partnership hosted a five-part webinar series to support the development of a Safe Routes to School program in the Houston, Texas metro area. The Houston Health Department funded the series, and it was supported by local agency partners in Harris County. Webinar topics covered: An Introduction to Safe Routes to School, Education and Encouragement Programming, Engineering Strategies for Safe Routes to School, Partnering with Schools and School Districts, and Safe Routes to School Advocacy. A diverse group of participants from around Houston and Harris County attended the webinars, including local agency staff, community members, and non-profit organizations. This series equipped participants with the necessary information to begin developing Safe Routes to School programs at the school and neighborhood levels.

ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 27TH FROM 3PM-4PM CT THE HOUSTON HEALTH DEPARTMENT IS HOSTING A FREE WEBINAR PRESENTED BY THE SAFE ROUTES PARTNERSHIP:

ENGINEERING STRATEGIES FOR SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

THURSDAY, JANUARY 27TH, 3PM-4PM CT

REGISTER HERE:
[HTTPS://BIT.LY/SAFEROUTES_127](https://bit.ly/saferoutes_127)

Safe infrastructure is a key part of ensuring students can travel safely to and from school. Join us as we dive into engineering strategies for Safe Routes to School projects. We will discuss how street design and infrastructure can encourage more students to walk and roll to school, and highlight a few school safety improvement projects in Houston. We will also share ideas for organizing walk audits, design charrettes, temporary safety demonstrations, and more activities to engage the community in the process!

SPEAKERS

- Kori Johnson, Safe Routes Partnership
- Aimee Schultze, Harris County Public Health

This webinar is part of a series of free webinars provided by the Houston Health Department and presented by the Safe Routes Partnership.

To register for this free webinar scan this QR code:




HOUSTON HEALTH DEPARTMENT



Creating Active Communities

Safe Routes to Parks

As parks and green spaces continued to be top destinations for communities throughout the pandemic, the Safe Routes to Parks program was well-equipped to lead the effort in supporting the demand for safe and convenient access to parks. Our Safe Routes to Parks Activating Communities program selected seven organizations to develop action plans aimed at improving safe, equitable access to local parks in their communities. Building upon the Safe Routes to Parks Action Framework, these grantees received training, individualized consultation, and technical assistance, connection with peer communities to learn from one another, an in-person workshop in their communities, as well as grants of \$12,500 each to begin the implementation of the Safe Routes to Parks action plan.

To support communities in their efforts to increase park access, a series of resources was created to provide a better understanding of state and federal funding options for Safe Routes to Parks. These factsheets provided an opportunity to learn about funding available in local budgets, how to fund infrastructure improvements, case studies on paying for parks and connections to greenspaces with general obligation bonds, and how states prioritize goals like equity, local planning, and project implementation by incentivizing actions that move communities toward those goals.



Human Resources Development Council in Bozeman, Montana

As a 2021 Safe Routes to Parks Activating Communities grantee, Human Resources Development Council in Bozeman, Montana established a goal to increase access to parks, trails, and recreation by expanding engagement opportunities and incorporating action items into the upcoming citywide parks plan update. Specifically, they want to focus on helping the city engage people who have not historically benefited from equitable access to parks, including low-income households, Black, Indigenous, and people of color households, and people with disabilities. Human Resources Development Council established community liaison positions to ensure meaningful input on the plan from disabled, Latinx, Black, Indigenous, and other people of color communities in Bozeman, and the development of the parks, recreation, and active transportation plan is underway.

Why Safe Routes to Parks: Stories, Data, and Resources to Illustrate the Mission

Safe Routes Partnership is passionate about improving park access for everyone, and we believe that equity must be at the center of work to connect people to everyday destinations. Our visual storyboard - illustrated with statistics and successes - helps explain the Safe Routes to Parks program, and invites you to join us in advocating for equitable parks in your community and everywhere.

SAFE ACCESS TO PARKS IS A RIGHT & A NECESSITY FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES.



© 2021 Safe Routes Partnership

Parks offer abundant physical, social, and mental health benefits to people playing, exercising, and spending time in them.

Mobility Justice

As an organization committed to advancing safe walking and rolling to and from schools and in everyday life for people of all races, ethnicities, income levels, abilities, and disabilities, we know we cannot achieve this goal without examining why current conditions are the way they are and consciously choosing to do things differently. Transportation inequity didn't happen overnight. We built it this way through policy and funding decisions. The good news is we can use the same tools to work with communities and address the ongoing effects of inequitable decisions. Our resource, *"Taking Steps toward Mobility Justice: An Invitation to Learn More and Take Action,"* outlines three actions that advocates can take to understand how people move through their communities and resources to address the inequities built into our transportation system.

Our communities are built on a foundation of policy and funding decisions that **intentionally excluded Black communities and communities of color.**



Learn about the history at <https://tinyurl.com/MovingTowardMobilityJustice>





CONNECTING PEOPLE TO PARKS:
A Toolkit to Increase Safe and Equitable
Access to Local Parks and Green Spaces



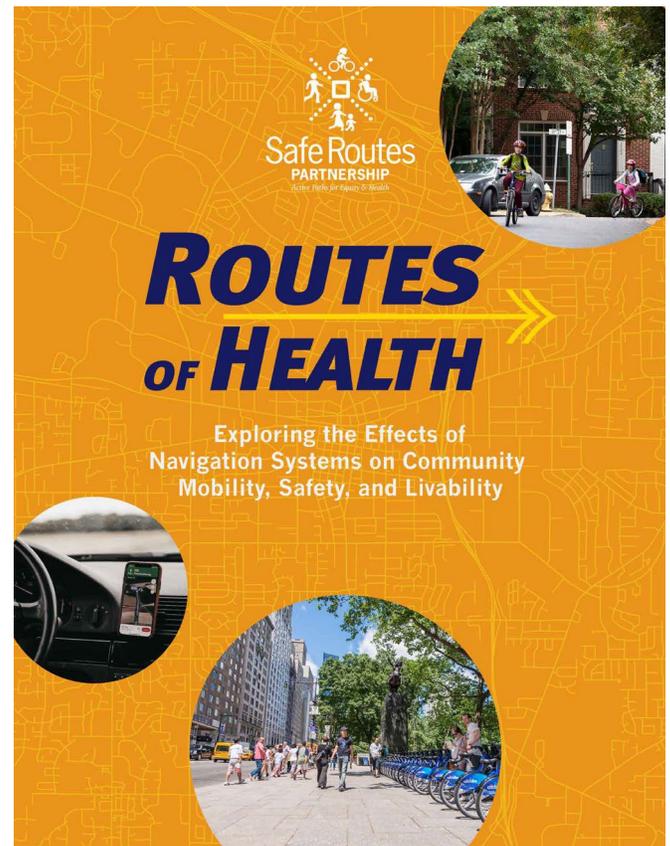
Photo Credit: Healthy Ride Pittsburgh

Connecting People to Parks

Everyone deserves safe and easy access to parks, but not all people and neighborhoods have that opportunity. With generous support from the Oregon Health Authority, we created “*Connecting People to Parks: A Toolkit to Increase Safe and Equitable Access to Local Parks and Green Spaces*” focusing on increasing access to parks via active transportation as well as ensuring a high-quality, safe experience within the park itself. Developed using the Safe Routes to Parks Action Framework, this toolkit guides advocates and agency staff as they learn how to thoughtfully engage their community, assess barriers to safe and equitable park access, identify goals and take meaningful action steps, and consider how to sustain their ongoing Safe Routes to Parks efforts.

Routes of Health: Exploring the Effects of Navigation Systems on Community Mobility, Safety, and Livability

The navigation and routing revolution over the past decade is creating a vast shift in traffic patterns and behaviors on streets around the country. While communities continue to grapple with automobile reliance, insufficient transit access, and lack of multimodal options, our report, “*Routes of Health: Exploring the Effects of Navigation Systems on Community Mobility, Safety, and Livability*,” identifies several promising directions to address the effects of navigation systems that are exacerbating local challenges. With case studies from five communities and resources for community members, local policymakers, planners, and transportation practitioners, this report highlights how navigation systems are but one piece of the systemic issues related to transportation and land use.





Supporting the Go Human Community Streets Mini-Grants Program

Safety and Engagement Projects Advancing Community Leadership and Resilience

Safe Routes Partnership was proud to partner with the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) to provide grant administration support to the Community Streets Mini-Grants Program. The Mini-Grants Program funded 31 safety and engagement projects across four counties and 19 communities in Southern California. To support the program, Safe Routes Partnership provided technical assistance with outreach and engagement efforts, application management, project communications and promotions, and awardee coordination.



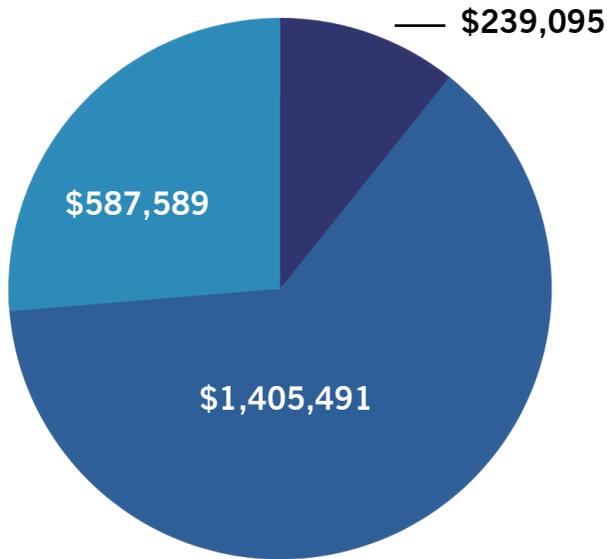
Safe Routes Partnership

The goal of the Community Streets Mini-Grants Program was to build street-level community resiliency and increase the safety of people most harmed by traffic injuries and fatalities, including and without limitation to Black, Indigenous and people of color, people with disabilities, and frontline workers, particularly those walking and biking. Funding priorities for the 2021 Mini-Grants Program included:

- Investment in organizations focused on or led by members of disadvantaged or underinvested communities in the region; public health organizations, disability justice organizations, social service organizations; parent groups; organizations that serve elders; organizations that serve rural communities.
- Projects that leverage Go Human safety resources, including co-branded safety materials or the Kit of Parts, a lending library of temporary streets improvement demonstration materials.
- Projects that support leadership and capacity-building strategies.

The Mini-Grant Program funded 31 safety and engagement projects that demonstrated innovation, partnership development, and creativity that helped support resiliency and safety in communities vulnerable to traffic violence. Projects ranged from an artistic crosswalk celebrating the local community to a documentary focused on the daily experiences that Black lives are encountering while bicycling in their communities to a robust bilingual education and outreach program around safe passages, bike safety, pedestrian traffic, and more.

2021 Financial Statements



Income

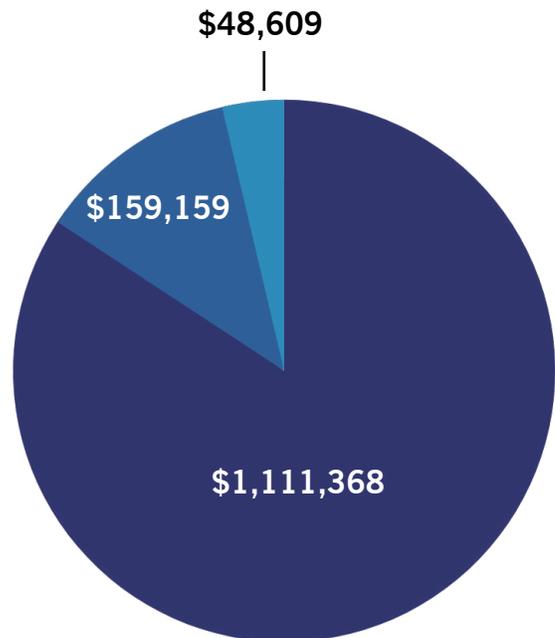
- Government - (11%)
- Foundations & Corporate - (63%)
- Fee for Service Income and Individual Support - (26%)

Total Income - \$2,232,175

Expenses

- Program (84%)
- General & Administration (12%)
- Fundraising (4%)

Total Expenses - \$1,319,136



Note: The Safe Routes Partnership often receives multi-year grants, where some of the revenue is booked in a different year than when expenditures are made. The Safe Routes Partnership had \$867,690 in income booked in prior years released from restrictions in 2021. We also have \$1,340,298 in 2021 (or prior year) income that is restricted for use in 2022 or after.



Safe Routes PARTNERSHIP

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