

WASHINGTON

Graduated Driver's License Partnership

▶ AT-A-GLANCE

▶ Project Characteristics

Youth
Public-Private Partnership
Licensing

▶ Program Areas

Occupant Protection
Youth Programs

▶ Targeted Populations

Teens and Parents

▶ Type of Jurisdiction

State

▶ Jurisdiction Size

5.9 million

▶ Funding

Section 402: \$ 50,000

▶ Contact

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Problem Identification

Teenagers make up just seven percent of Washington's driving population, but are responsible for 14 percent of the fatal collisions. For teens, the combination of inexperience and immaturity provides the foundation for a high death rate.

In July 2001, a Graduated Driver's License law went into effect that requires that parents spend an additional 50 hours of behind-the-wheel driving time with teenagers before they can get a license. These new license provisions also limit the number of other teens that can drive with a newly licensed teen driver, and limits late-night driving as well. In other states where similar laws are on the books, teen traffic collisions decreased more than 30 percent. However, before Washington's new law can achieve its potential, it needs to be aggressively publicized and enforced.

Goals and Objectives

The goal of the Washington Traffic Safety Commission's (WTSC) Graduated Driver's License Partnership project is to reduce the number of injuries and fatalities among drivers 18 years old and younger.

The project established the following objectives:

- Equip law enforcement with the tools to enforce the state's Graduated Driver's License law;
- Educate parents about why they should support the law by talking with their teenaged drivers; and
- Aggressively publicize the new law.

Strategies and Activities

The Graduated Driver's License Partnership project implemented the following strategies and related activities:

- Formed an inter-governmental committee to develop recommendations for ways the law could be improved, communicated, and better enforced.
- Held market research meetings with 11 parents and 13 law enforcement officers to ascertain their views on the new Graduated Licensing rules and how the law could be better enforced.
- Developed a paid media partnership with both Belo Marketing, a statewide media outlet, and with State Farm Insurance.

- Developed and produced Public Service Announcements with production paid for by Belo Marketing.
- Developed materials that outlined the Graduated Licensing rules for teens and parents, including information for teens with permits. Made this information available on websites.
 - Created an educational brochure and distributed it through commercial driving schools, high schools and junior high schools, State Farm offices, Department of Licensing and State Patrol offices, as well as Community Traffic Safety Task Force Programs and the local Educational Service District Offices.
 - Created a parent's booklet that includes information for parents who are teaching teens how to drive, including common driving rules that parents have forgotten.
- Developed an educational seminar for parents and a roll call video and pocket card for law enforcement officers.
- Initiated efforts to publicize special law enforcement projects aimed at teen driving violations.
- Enlisted the aid of 300 State Farm Insurance offices statewide as points of distribution for the brochures and posters.

Results

The Graduated Driver's License Partnership project achieved the following results:

- Increased the visibility of the Graduated Driver's License project and related issues. State Farm's involvement resulted in radio and television public service announcements about the project reaching 80% of the state's adult population several times per day.
- Conducted market research on the awareness levels of teens and parents and on the support for the program. The market research showed that parents and teens were more aware of the Graduated Driver's License provisions and the intent of the law.
- Created a successful public-private partnership with the State, the media, and an insurance company that permitted all three organizations to meet their respective goals and will likely continue into 2004.
- Decreased collisions involving 16 year-olds by 67 percent. More teens are now waiting until they are 17 years old to get their license.
- Decreased collisions involving 17 year-olds by 53 percent.