CALIFORNIA OFFICE OF TRAFFIC SAFETY

2020-2023 STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT PLAN

CALIFORNIA OFFICE OF TRAFFIC SAFETY

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Message From the Director

I am pleased to present the 2020 – 2023 Strategic Management Plan for the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS).

California's OTS team is comprised of passionate and service-oriented individuals who, through their raw tenacity and innovative spirit, are determined to realize our vision of a California where every person, regardless of their mode of travel, will ***Go Safely***. With an estimated 3,600 deaths and 13,000 serious injuries occurring annually from traffic crashes – and with 94 percent of them caused by human error - our task is great.

As California assumes a leadership role in the rapidly-evolving mobility space, OTS will continue to explore and fund countermeasures that employ cutting edge technologies and innovative practices to address the State's toughest safety challenges for all road users.

Achieving our vision only happens through meaningful collaboration with stakeholders at every level. Through fostering partnerships, providing reliable data, improving our business processes, and developing our team to be effective leaders in road safety, OTS is well-positioned for the work that lies ahead.

This Strategic Management Plan reflects our commitment to road safety and serves as a roadmap and vital tool to guide our actions over the next four years to bring California closer to its goal of zero traffic-related deaths.

Barbara L. Rooney
Director
California Office of Traffic Safety

About Us

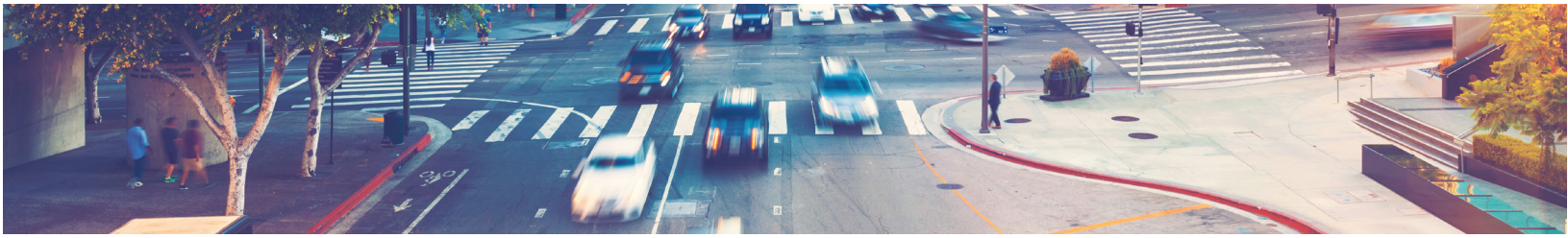
OTS takes a leadership role in efforts to make California roadways safe for all users. Through thoughtful, forward-thinking, and data-driven selection of grants to local and state agencies, OTS provides an effective means of eliminating fatalities, injuries, and economic losses resulting from crashes.

Through grant funding made available to California by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), OTS annually funds over $80 million dollars in innovative, evidence-based education and enforcement programs and technologies designed to make California's roadways safer. OTS is determined to identify and overcome new traffic safety issues as travel habits change and transportation technologies emerge. To that end, we evaluate all potential programs to ensure California addresses current and future traffic safety needs.

Our success depends on strong partnerships. We work with approximately 300 state and local agencies to make the most effective use of federal grant program funds. Additionally, we coordinate with traffic safety partners to track successful programs, encourage collaboration, develop new countermeasures, and explore emerging trends.

In addition to the many programs funded through these grants, the OTS team is committed to sharing the message of traffic safety. We accomplish this through public awareness campaigns that educate the public on safe driving habits. Our team proudly represents California as a leader in traffic safety efforts at the local, state, and national levels.

Vision and Mission



California State Transportation Agency Vision

To transform the lives of all Californians through a safe, accessible, low carbon, 21st century multimodal transportation system.

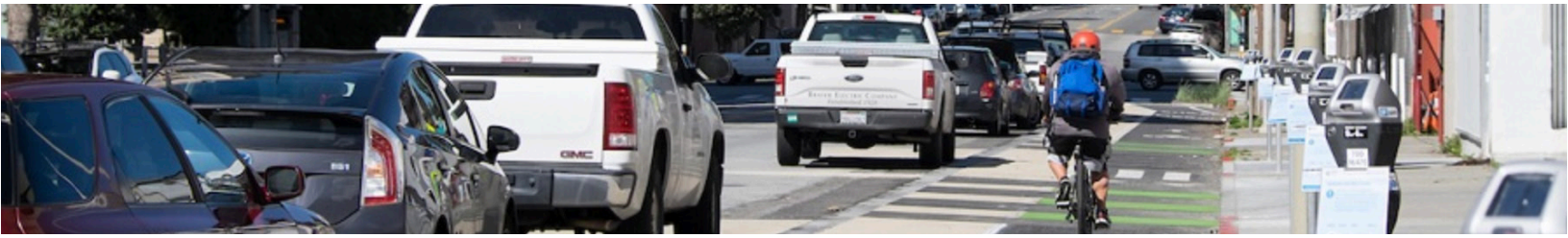
Office of Traffic Safety Vision

Everyone traveling on California roadways will go safely.

Office of Traffic Safety Mission

Effectively administer traffic safety grants that deliver innovative programs and eliminate traffic fatalities and injuries on California roadways.

Core Values



SERVICE

We take pride in our service and how we treat our partners and stakeholders.

RESPECT

We value differing opinions and act with integrity and responsiveness in all of our interactions.

INNOVATION

We welcome and actively seek new ideas to improve traffic safety and our services.

PASSION

We are enthusiastic about our mission to save lives and keep travelers safe on California's roads.

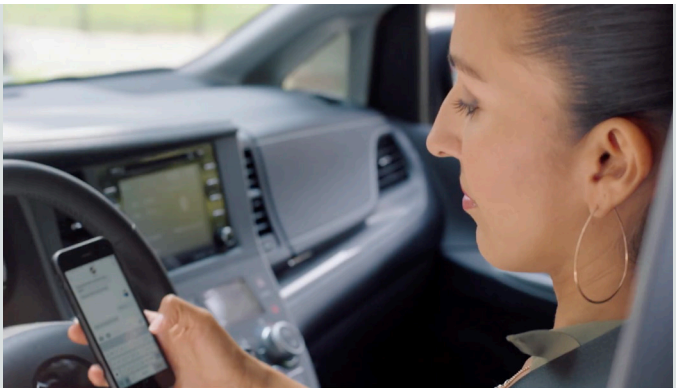
Program Areas

ALCOHOL-IMPAIRED DRIVING

Alcohol-impaired driving remains one of the biggest threats to public safety and well-being on our roadways. In 2018, 30% of all traffic deaths in California were alcohol-related. OTS-supported programs focus on education, enforcement, and prevention measures. The programs inform the public of the actions they can take to avoid this dangerous behavior as well as deter people from driving when they are impaired. Grant programs include enforcement operations dedicated to stopping and arresting suspected impaired drivers, purchase of equipment such as breath testing devices, monitoring and treatment of high-risk DUI offenders, and youth education programs for high school and college students on the dangers and consequences of impaired driving.

DRUG-IMPAIRED DRIVING

Drug-impaired driving is one of the toughest safety challenges we face on roadways. The number of drivers under the influence of drugs, or a combination of drugs and alcohol, is on the rise. Prescription drugs, over-the-counter medications, marijuana, and illegal drugs may affect one's driving ability, especially in combination with alcohol or other drugs. A recent report by the Governors Highway Safety Association found that in 2016, more drivers killed in crashes tested positive for drugs (44%) than alcohol (38%). Measures to address the issue include increased officer training in identifying and detecting drug impairment in drivers through the Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement (ARIDE) and Drug Recognition Evaluator (DRE) programs. OTS grant programs also include dedicated prosecution teams for drug-impaired driving cases, as well as prosecutor training on handling driving under the influence of drug cases through every step of the criminal process. Education campaigns inform the public about the dangers of driving under the influence of substances other than alcohol, helping shift social norms around drug-impaired driving.



DISTRACTED DRIVING

Distracted driving is anything that takes your eyes, hands, or mind away from the task of driving. In 2017, 3,166 people were killed nationwide in crashes involving a distracted driver, accounting for 9% of all traffic deaths. The advancements in smart phone technology have created the biggest distraction for drivers, whether it is texting, taking pictures, emailing, or using apps. A 2019 OTS Public Opinion Survey found nearly 70 percent of Californians identified distracted driving (texting or talking) as the biggest problem on California roadways. Distracted driving countermeasures include paid media education campaigns that inform the public of the dangers of distracted driving and encourage drivers to travel free of distractions. Outreach activities and education programs target teen drivers to change behaviors and stay off the phone while driving, as data shows driver distraction is the primary cause of major injury crashes involving teens. Grant programs also include dedicated enforcement of California's hands-free cell phone law.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES (EMS)

Providing timely care to crash victims is critical to reducing deaths and the severity of injuries. Grant programs for emergency medical services (EMS) include upgrading extrication equipment that allows emergency responders to quickly access occupants trapped in vehicles. Many emergency response agencies have outdated equipment that is in need of replacement, affecting their ability to reach victims quickly and increase their survivability.

MOTORCYCLE SAFETY

Efforts to reduce motorcycle collisions, injuries, and deaths include programs that provide hands-on motorcycle training to riders. The trainings allow experienced riders to hone their skills. Motorcycle safety programs also include improving the safety of riders and road users by educating the public how to interact with motorcycles and encouraging riders to wear protective gear. Enforcement operations focus on drivers and riders who make violations that increase the risk of crashes, including speeding, improper turning, running red lights, or failing to yield.

OCCUPANT PROTECTION

While the seat belt use rate in California is 96.2%, child passenger safety remains a critical program to ensure children are properly restrained in child safety seats. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, nearly 60% of car seats are used incorrectly. Grant programs focus on a variety of activities to educate parents and guardians on child safety seat laws, including child safety seat check-ups, education classes on using and properly installing the right car seat, and providing child safety seats to families in need, as well as Child Passenger Safety Technician training and certification courses. Increased enforcement of seat belt laws and educating teens about buckling up are additional countermeasures to encourage vehicle occupants to use seat belts.

PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE SAFETY

Pedestrian and bicycle safety remains an important traffic safety issue in an ever-changing transportation landscape that accommodates all types of road users. According to a 2019 Governors Highway Safety Association report, pedestrian traffic fatalities in California increased by 12% from 2018 to 2019. OTS funds programs that promote safe behaviors and the use of roadways when walking or biking. Programs target all age groups to raise awareness about traffic rules, rights, and responsibilities whether you are driving, on foot or on bikes. Specifically, programs are designed for high-risk populations, including youth and older community members, all in an effort to teach safer driving, bicycling, and walking behaviors. Activities for youth include bicycle trainings and walking courses to build skills that make children comfortable getting to and from school. Additional outreach targets underserved and older communities to identify safety issues and demonstrate best safety practices in real time.

POLICE TRAFFIC SERVICES

OTS provides grants to more than 100 law enforcement agencies throughout the state to conduct enforcement and education programs focused on deterring unsafe roadway behaviors and promoting safe roadway habits. Enforcement activities dedicate additional officers on roads to target specific traffic safety issues including distracted driving, seat belt use, impaired driving, speeding, bicycle and pedestrian safety, and other traffic violations that increase the risk for crashes. Other grant programs include officer training on holding DUI/Driver's License checkpoints and identifying suspected impaired drivers. Education activities include presentations to community members, organizations, and schools.

PUBLIC AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

OTS utilizes a variety of monthly and year-round education campaigns to reach Californians and encourage safe behaviors when on the go. The program serves as the state's traffic safety advocate and go-to resource for all Californians, educating the public on ways they can stay safe and make safety their top priority. Statewide media campaign efforts coincide with national campaigns focused on impaired driving, distracted driving, and pedestrian safety. These "Go Safely, California" statewide campaigns showcase a series of traffic safety messages on TV, streaming services, outdoor billboards, radio, and social media, reaching people across all types of platforms with the goal of changing behaviors. Outreach efforts specifically target youth, teens, and young adults.

TRAFFIC RECORDS/ROADWAY SAFETY

Reliable data plays an important role in identifying traffic safety problems. OTS helps improve and streamline traffic collision database systems, develop and analyze mapping systems to pinpoint high-collision areas and identify crash trends, and promote data sharing and integrate traffic records systems. The OTS grants are used to purchase hardware and software tools to build and improve data collection systems, modernize manual databases, and digitize physical reports and print collections.

GOAL 1 LEADERSHIP

Be a recognized leader that advances effective and innovative traffic safety policies, counter measures, and best practices.

For over 50 years, OTS has been charged with implementing California's Traffic Safety Program. Through growth in our expertise and concentration in a specific mission, OTS is uniquely positioned to take a leadership role in bringing California sister agencies, external partners, and federal partners together to leverage knowledge across consortiums and be a hub for traffic safety policies, counter measures, and best practices.

Strategy 1.1 Increase outreach to existing and prospective grantees.

Strategy 1.2 Increase collaboration and expand our partnerships.

Strategy 1.3 Engage in and represent California at the state and national level.

Strategy 1.4 Leverage and expand our traffic safety subject matter expertise.

GOAL 2 SERVICE

Provide exceptional service to our traffic safety partners and the public.

As a leader in traffic safety, OTS holds itself to the highest service standards. When collaborating with partners, OTS will provide timely, accurate, and professional service. OTS strives to be efficient and remain trustworthy in all interactions, relying on data to make crucial decisions.

Strategy 2.1 Lead data safety collection efforts in order to make better evidence-based decisions.

Strategy 2.2 Improve our business processes.

Strategy 2.3 Increase public outreach and awareness.

GOAL 3 STEWARDSHIP

Provide excellent stewardship of the funding entrusted to us.

OTS administers traffic safety grants using Federal Highway Safety Program funds. OTS manages these funds in a transparent and responsible manner. Through careful planning, forecasting, and research, OTS identifies the areas of greatest potential impact and allocates resources accordingly. OTS will use its available funds for the benefit and safety of those traveling on California roadways.

Strategy 3.1 Maximize available funding to further protect California's road users.

Strategy 3.2 Continuously improve program integrity.

GOAL 4 WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Train, develop, and retain our employees to be experts and leaders in public service.

OTS strongly believes that a diverse group of passionate people that are empowered to be their best will propel our team to success. Encouraging growth and development will ensure OTS is led by experts in their fields. Providing a culture of respect, collaboration, and open communication allows our team to make a difference in traffic safety.

Strategy 4.1 Encourage employee development.

Strategy 4.2 Promote respect, service, and a positive work environment.

Strategy 4.3 Recruit candidates who have a passion for traffic safety.

GOAL 5 TRANSPORTATION TRENDS

Address the traffic safety implications related to emerging transportation technology and trends.

Changes in transportation technology are moving faster than ever. OTS is preparing to meet the traffic safety needs of tomorrow by exploring the changes to transportation behavior today. The safety implications of bike-and scooter-sharing, carpooling apps, and other new options for travelers must be addressed to ensure Californians continue to go safely, however they decide to travel on roadways.

Strategy 5.1 Understand the implications of emerging transportation technologies.

Strategy 5.2 Encourage the use of emerging technologies to improve traffic safety.

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