NEBRASKA

Occupant Protection Program Assessment

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INTRODUCTION

The Nebraska Department of Transportation Highway Safety Office (NDOT HSO) is responsible for developing and implementing effective strategies to reduce the State's traffic-related injury and fatality rates. The mission of the HSO is to reduce the State's traffic crashes, injuries, and fatalities on the roads through leadership, innovation, facilitation, and program support in partnership with other public and private organizations.

Nebraska, in cooperation with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), initiated this comprehensive assessment of the Occupant Protection (OP) component of its highway safety program for Federal Fiscal Year 2025. This assessment is intended to guide the HSO towards programmatic improvements intended to increase OP use and decrease injuries and fatalities statewide.

Nebraska is the 16th largest state in the nation by area, consisting of 77,347 square miles. Located in the Midwest region of the United States, Nebraska is bordered by South Dakota to the north, Iowa to the east, Missouri to the southeast, Kansas to the south, Colorado to the southwest, and Wyoming to the west. It is the 38th most populous state, with the United States Census Bureau estimating the population of Nebraska to be 2,005,465 (December 2024). Nebraska ranks 43rd in the nation in terms of population density with 24.94 people per square mile. The state capital is Lincoln, while the most populous city is Omaha.

Traffic fatalities in the United States decreased by 4.3 percent from 2022 to 2023 (42,721 to 40,901). Although the observed daytime seat belt use rate for the United States overall in 2023 was 91.9 percent, 49 percent of passenger vehicle occupants killed in traffic crashes in 2023 were unrestrained. The lack of proper restraint use therefore remains a serious highway safety, public health, and societal issue. This is true in Nebraska where in 2023, 69 percent of passenger vehicle occupants killed were unrestrained (based on known restraint use).

OP is the foundation of a sound traffic safety program and increased seat belt use can provide

reductions in fatalities and injuries. Using a seat belt properly is the single most effective thing people can do to protect themselves in a crash. The national seat belt use rate was 91.2 percent in 2024 as estimated by NHTSA's National Occupant Protection Use Survey (NOPUS). Per Nebraska's state seat belt use survey, the seat belt use rate increased from 80.4 percent in 2024 to 81.7 percent in 2025. Nebraska has a secondary enforcement seat belt law for adults in the front seat of passenger vehicles.

Based on the fundamental elements of the *Uniform Guidelines of State Highway Safety Programs for Occupant Protection*, this assessment report identifies Nebraska's strengths and challenges and provides recommendations for each of the following specific areas: Program Management; Legislation, Regulation, and Policy; Law Enforcement; Communication; OP for Children; Outreach; and Data and Evaluation.

The key recommendations in this report are recommendations the assessment team found to be most critical for improving the State's OP program. While Nebraska has multiple initiatives in place to improve its programs, there is always room for growth. All recommendations presented in this report are intended to help increase restraint use and save lives in Nebraska.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The assessment team would like to acknowledge the dedication and hard work of all the statewide partners, advocates, and stakeholders who took the time to contribute their knowledge and expertise during the assessment.

We would like to acknowledge and thank the Nebraska Department of Transportation Highway Safety Office (NDOT HSO) Administrator, Ryley Egger; HSO Supervisor, Greg McVey; Traffic Safety Specialist, Paul Letcher; Traffic Records Coordinator, Ashley Pick; Impaired Driving Coordinator, Dustin Stewart; HSO Accountant, Chrissy Stege; and Highway Safety Program Manager Intern, Eli Albrecht for their support, level of effort, and commitment to occupant protection (OP) in Nebraska.

The assessment benefited from the guidance of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration headquarters and regional staff: Leah Scully and Jeff Halloran, and support from their supervisors, Division Chief Tara Kelley-Baker and Regional Administrator Susan deCourcy.

Special recognition and appreciation also go to Laura Nichols for her assistance throughout the assessment process and in producing this report.

Each member of the team appreciated the opportunity to have served on this assessment and hopes that consideration and implementation of the proposed recommendations will enable Nebraska to continue to improve its OP program.

Note:

The information included in this document has been collected from a variety of sources including interviews, official documents, websites, and other materials. Sources may not be consistent. Some copyrighted material has been used under the "Fair Use" Doctrine of the US copyright statute.

ASSESSMENT BACKGROUND

The purpose of the Occupant Protection (OP) program assessment is to provide Nebraska with a review of its statewide OP program through identification of programmatic strengths, accomplishments, challenges, and recommendations for improvement. The assessment is a tool for OP program planning, development, and implementation purposes and for making decisions about how to best prioritize programs and use available resources. This assessment was conducted virtually via telephone and computer technology between all parties involved, i.e. Nebraska personnel, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) headquarters, and regional office staff and six Assessment Team Members.

The technical assessment is intended to:

- Provide an opportunity for open, non-threatening dialogue between Nebraska Department of Transportation Highway Safety Office (NDOT HSO) and its partners;
- Assist with long-range planning;
- Assist with resource allocation;
- Identify strengths, challenges, and opportunities for improvement;
- Generate administrative and political support for program improvement; and
- Serve as a benchmark against which to measure future improvements.

All states, in cooperation with their political subdivisions, should have a comprehensive OP program that educates and motivates its citizens to use available motor vehicle OP systems. A combination of use requirements, enforcement, public information, education, and outreach is necessary to achieve significant lasting increases in seat belt and child restraint use, which will prevent fatalities and decrease the number and severity of injuries.

The NHTSA headquarters and regional office staff facilitated this OP Program Assessment. Working with the HSO, NHTSA recommended a team of five individuals with demonstrated subject matter expertise in the areas of Program Management; Legislation, Regulation, and Policy; Law Enforcement; Communication; OP for Children; Outreach; and Data and Evaluation. The assessment team conducted the assessment based on the *Uniform Guidelines for State Highway Safety Programs, Highway Safety Program Guideline No. 20, Occupant Protection* (March 2025). The U.S. Department of Transportation developed the guidelines in collaboration with states to support technical guidelines for the states. The assessment followed the guidelines, and each section of this report reflects this guiding document.

The assessment consisted of a thorough review of State-provided OP program briefing materials and interviews with State and community-level program directors, coordinators, advocates, traffic safety partners, law enforcement personnel, and the HSO staff. The team convened virtually to review and analyze the information presented, noting the OP program's strengths and challenges as well as recommendations for improvement. The recommendations provided are based on the unique characteristics of the State and what the assessment team members believe Nebraska and its partners could do to improve the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of their OP activities. The conclusions drawn by the assessment team are based upon, and limited by, the facts and information provided in the briefing materials and by various stakeholders who presented information to the assessment team.

The assessment report is a consensus report and belongs to Nebraska. This is not a NHTSA document. The assessment team recognizes the commendable and committed work conducted throughout Nebraska in the area of OP. It is not the intent of this report to thoroughly document all the successes, nor to give credit to the large number of individuals at all levels who are dedicated to traffic safety. By its very nature, this report focuses on areas that need improvement. The report should not be viewed as criticism. Rather, it is an opportunity to provide assistance and encourage improvement, which is consistent with the overall goals of traffic safety program assessments.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

- **Fill the Occupant Protection Coordinator position.**

- **Develop and implement a process to incorporate an Occupant Protection Advisory Task Force to assist the Occupant Protection Coordinator in determining funding for potential occupant protection grantees and to assist in coordination of programs across the State.**

LEGISLATION/REGULATION AND POLICY

- **Upgrade the seat belt law to be a primary offense through the legislative process or initiative petition.**

- **Increase the fine for a violation of the seat belt and child restraint laws to be commensurate with other traffic offenses such as speeding, failing to stop at a stop sign, and running a red light.**

LAW ENFORCEMENT

- **Collaborate with the Police Chiefs Association of Nebraska and Nebraska Sheriffs' Association to develop and implement a traffic safety committee within those associations to:**
  - **act as an advisory council;**
  - **serve as a forum for discussion; and**
  - **provide recommendations to its members for the improvement of police traffic management and the promotion of traffic safety.**

- **Develop and implement a grant-funded traffic law enforcement activity evaluation methodology that identifies and prioritizes the outputs of traffic law enforcement productivity to support the Nebraska Strategic Highway Safety Plan.**

- **Develop a Law Enforcement Liaison seat belt enforcement email newsletter to be shared with key stakeholders on a quarterly basis as a progress report for necessary actions and a forum to recognize outstanding performance to support the Nebraska Strategic Highway Safety Plan. Essentially the seat belt newsletter is an extension of a marketing strategy. The purpose of the newsletter is to help build a brand, inform, motivate the select audience, and create value by sharing relevant and valuable information.**

COMMUNICATION

- **Publish and share with traffic safety advocates and subrecipients the data and information provided in the statewide observational surveys and crash data. Include relevant information and crash data specific to local communities in a usable format, and possibly develop infographics, for circulation on media platforms.**

- **Form a sub-committee, possibly under an Occupant Protection Task Force, to:**
    - **Review webpages on the Nebraska Department of Transportation and Drive Smart Nebraska websites to consolidate and combine information for easier access by the public.**
    - **Review all subrecipients' and traffic safety advocate websites and social media sites and select sites to include links on the Highway Safety Office webpages.**
    - **Develop a schedule to provide messaging to social media (Facebook, Spotify, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.) and marketing efforts for the Highway Safety Office and partners so information is updated and messaging is consistent across the State.**
    - **Add materials and resources for placement and download by public, media, and traffic safety advocates.**
    - **Include media representatives on the Occupant Protection Task Force membership.**
    - **Work towards providing a "one stop shop" for the public, traffic safety advocates, media, and law enforcement to access all things traffic safety in Nebraska in one location.**

OCCUPANT PROTECTION FOR CHILDREN

- **Evaluate whether the number of child passenger safety technicians and inspection stations in Nebraska counties, based on population, is sufficient to meet community needs. Identify communities that are underserved and develop a plan to address the needs. (See Appendix for an example of a tool to determine underserved communities.)**

- **Enhance communication between child passenger safety technician instructors, child passenger safety technicians, and technician proxies throughout Nebraska.**
    - **Create a sustainable mentoring network to support newly certified child passenger safety technician instructors, technicians, and technician proxies.**
    - **Recruit experienced child passenger safety technicians to become technician proxies who can observe and approve the required seat checks for recertification, particularly in counties that do not have a child passenger safety instructor or technician proxy.**
    - **Maintain current statewide inspection stations and increase the number of inspection stations in additional geographic locations as needed.**

OUTREACH PROGRAM

- **Expand proven programs like *Teens in the Driver Seat* and *Project Nightlife*.**

- **Engage existing and new *Teens in the Driver Seat* programs to encourage seat belt policies for students, school employees, and businesses in their areas.**

- **Task a team, possibly a sub-committee of an Occupant Protection Task Force, to:**
    - **develop standardized presentations or programs for different age groups which meet the Nebraska Department of Education Standards for easier access to the school classrooms.**
    - **research avenues to reach the medical communities in the State to further traffic safety messaging with their patients.**
    - **develop short video interviews with education, medical, minority, and faith-based leaders regarding the importance of seat belt use and child restraints for display on local community social media channels.**

DATA AND EVALUATION

- **Correct the analytical challenges within the State's crash reporting system. Having near real-time data available to the highway safety partners will promote improved problem identification and program evaluation efforts.**

- **Include additional seat belt observation sites in counties that are not part of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's sample as part of the Bureau of Sociological Research's annual survey. The sites can be conveniently selected to ensure sufficient vehicle count. If feasible, rotate the included counties each year to provide observational seat belt use data to jurisdictions throughout the State.**

1. PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

GUIDELINE:

Each state should have centralized program planning, implementation and coordination to achieve and sustain high rates of seat belt use. Evaluation is also important for determining progress and ultimate success of occupant protection programs.

- *Provide leadership, training and technical assistance to other State agencies and local occupant protection programs and projects;*
- *Establish and convene an occupant protection advisory task force or coalition to organize and generate broad-based support for programs. The coalition should include agencies and organizations that are representative of the State's demographic composition and critical to the implementation of occupant protection initiatives;*
- *Integrate occupant protection programs into community/corridor traffic safety and other injury prevention programs; and*
- *Evaluate the effectiveness of the State's occupant protection program.*

1A. STRENGTHS

- The Nebraska Department of Transportation Highway Safety Office (NDOT HSO) serves as the lead agency for the Occupant Protection (OP) program. The HSO has a position that is designated as the OP Coordinator.

- The project review and selection processes are documented in the *2024 HSO Program Management Manual* under Chapter 3 - Project Development. The HSO solicits proposals and awards grants to fund projects designed to reduce the number of deaths and serious injuries resulting from traffic crashes. For the OP program the focus is on unbelted fatalities. Grant contract proposals are submitted to the HSO by potential subrecipients following a prescribed process and deadlines. For successful applicants, the grant contract proposal becomes the grant application and final grant agreement.

- The HSO grant contract application process is comprised of three steps. During the month of February, grant contract application solicitation notices containing the issues to be addressed including identified problems and targets are published on the NDOT website by the HSO. This includes an emphasis for grant applications on OP efforts and actions. A notice is sent to public and non-profit organizations/agencies that will best be able to help attain the HSO targets. Potential subrecipients are asked to submit to the HSO a grant contract application form containing a problem statement, a description of proposed activities, and a complete budget. To be funded for OP, projects must have a direct link to the HSO-identified problems and targets. The HSO staff review each application to verify that it addresses the identified problems and meets all of the application requirements and reviews the budget component of each proposal. If necessary, the HSO staff work with the potential subrecipients to resolve any questions and develop a fully detailed and complete

grant contract application prior to the HSO team review. The HSO staff score the proposals and resolve any remaining questions. The HSO Administrator makes the final grant selection, determination, and approval.

- Statewide initiatives are "internal projects" that are created by HSO staff (i.e., media or training projects). The internal projects go through the same review and approval process as all other projects. The grant documentation for the internal projects follows the same requirements as the external grants.

- The monitoring policy can be found in the *2024 HSO Program Management Manual* under Chapter 5 - Grant Administration and Management, Section 14 Monitoring. The on-site monitoring form is located in *Appendix F* of the manual. The HSO developed and follows a procedure to conduct a risk evaluation for each subrecipient receiving National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) funds prior to making the grant award. The outcome of the 2 CFR Part 200.331(b) requires a pre-award risk assessment for each subrecipient must be used for purposes of determining the appropriate subrecipient monitoring including level of risk, type, and frequency and possible corrective action or follow-up. Monitoring is done to maintain control of a project, detect problems, identify changes or training needs, provide data for planning, evaluating, and creating an opportunity for the HSO to provide technical assistance when needed. It is also a way to encourage accountability on behalf of the subrecipient. Monitoring requires forms to be completed for documentation and maintained in the file.

- The problem identification process can be found in the *2024 HSO Program Management Manual* under Chapter 2, Section 5 - Identification of State and Local Problems (Data Analysis Procedure). The problem identification process used by the HSO includes analysis of traffic safety data from established statewide sources. The statistics analyzed are historical data collected over time through a uniform process. These statistics include the following:
    - State traffic crash database - vehicle, location, seat belt use, and other person level data
    - Data on average daily traffic counts and vehicle miles traveled
    - The federal Fatality Analysis Reporting System
    - Vehicle and Driver Information - the state's driver license, vehicle registration, and citation/conviction files
    - Trauma Registry, injury data, Crash Outcome Data Evaluation System, Emergency Medical System, and hospital data
    - Census and demographic data from the United States Census Bureau
    - Seat belt observation surveys

- HSO staff have participated in NHTSA's Highway Safety Grants Management training and the topical Program Management Workshops to learn skills needed to fully manage and evaluate their grants and programs.

- The *2022-2026 Strategic Highway Safety Plan* (SHSP) lists Critical Emphasis Areas which are:

- Increasing Seat Belt Usage
- Reducing Roadway/Lane Departure Crashes
- Reducing Impaired Driving Crashes
- Reducing Intersection Crashes
- Reducing Young Driver Crashes
- Reducing Older Driver Crashes
- Reducing Non-Motorist Crashes

- The HSO's federally funded programs are included in the *Triennial Highway Safety Plan - Annual Grant Application* and the *Annual Report* for the most recent federal fiscal year. Additional funding comes from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) for child passenger safety (CPS) and outreach. The HSO is involved in the DHHS programming of these funds due to the HSO's relationship on CPS and educational/outreach efforts.

- The Grants Fund Balances Report from NHTSA shows that the majority of the federal funds currently available for programming by the HSO are from Federal Fiscal Year 2025. There is very little or no carryforward funding in Section 402 or 405(b).

1B. CHALLENGES

- The OP Coordinator position is currently vacant.

- The OP Coordinator's sole responsibility is not dedicated specifically to OP projects. Instead, grant and program responsibilities are distributed amongst multiple staff based on the functions or activity of the grant effort.

- Grants that are issued to the HSO are required to follow the same documentation and processes as all externally awarded grants. Due to recent staffing changes, there is an opportunity to verify that all of the policies and procedures for the internal grants are being followed.

- An OP Advisory Task Force, to assist in determining funding for potential OP grantees and to assist in coordination of programs across the State, does not exist.

- The fines, fees, and penalties paid by unbelted drivers and other vehicle occupants are not used to support OP countermeasures. The current process for program funding is by an oversight body (legislature for the State, county commissions for their county, and city councils for their city) to determine where the funding is allocated. There is an example where the State's Constitution, Section VII-5, has earmarked all fines and penalties for violation of laws prohibiting the overloading of vehicles used upon the public roads and highways to be placed as follows: Seventy-five percent in a fund for state highways and twenty-five percent to the county general fund where the fine or penalty is paid. There is no earmarking for any OP fines and fees for use in OP programs.

1C. RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Fill the Occupant Protection Coordinator position.**

- Enroll the Occupant Protection Coordinator in the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Highway Safety Grants Management training and the Occupant Protection Program Management Workshop to learn skills needed to fully manage and evaluate the occupant protection programs.

- Verify that the internal project grant documentation follows the same requirements and reporting as outlined in the *2024 HSO Program Management Manual.*

- **Develop and implement a process to incorporate an Occupant Protection Advisory Task Force to assist the Occupant Protection Coordinator in determining funding for potential occupant protection grantees and to assist in coordination of programs across the State.**

- Expand the Constitutional provision for earmarking all fines and fees to include child restraint citation fines, fees, and penalties to go to programs that support the purchase of child restraints for low- or no-income families.

2. LEGISLATION/REGULATION AND POLICY

GUIDELINE:

Each state should enact and vigorously enforce primary enforcement occupant protection use laws. Each state should develop public information programs to provide clear guidance to the motoring public concerning motor vehicle occupant protection systems. This legal framework should include:

- *Legislation permitting primary enforcement that requires all motor vehicle occupants to use systems provided by the vehicle manufacturer;*
- *Legislation permitting primary enforcement that requires that children birth to 16 years old (or the State's driving age) be properly restrained in an appropriate child restraint system (i.e., certified by the manufacturer to meet all applicable Federal safety standards) or seat belt;*
- *Legislation permitting primary enforcement that requires children under 13 years old to be properly restrained in the rear seat (unless all available rear seats are occupied by younger children);*
- *Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) laws that include three stages of licensure, and that place restrictions and sanctions on high-risk driving situations for novice drivers (i.e., nighttime driving restrictions, passenger restrictions, zero tolerance, required seat belt use);*
- *Regulations requiring employees and contractors at all levels of government to wear seat belts when traveling on official business;*
- *Official policies requiring that organizations receiving Federal highway safety program grant funds develop and enforce an employee seat belt use policy; and*
- *Outreach to state insurance commissioners to encourage them to persuade insurers to offer incentives to policyholders who use seat belts and child restraints. Insurance commissioners are likely to have significant influence with insurers that write policies in their states.*

2A. STRENGTHS

- Nebraska's seat belt law includes the following components:
    - The driver and all front seat passengers are required to wear properly adjusted and fastened occupant protection (OP) systems.
    - The fine for violating the seat belt law is $25. There are no additional court costs and there are no points added to the violator's license.
    - The seat belt law is subject to secondary enforcement only.

- Nebraska's child restraint system law includes the following components:
    - Drivers are required to restrain children up to age eight in a child restraint system that meets Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 213.
    - All children up to the age of two are required to use a rear-facing child

restraint system until the child outgrows the manufacturer's maximum allowable height or weight.
    - Children ages eight, up to the age of eighteen, are required to be restrained in a child restraint system or seat belt.
    - The fine for violating the child restraint system law is $25 plus court costs and one point on the driver's license.
    - The Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT) is responsible for developing and implementing a public information and education program of child restraint systems and OP systems, plus a distribution and discount program for child restraint systems.
    - The child restraint system law provides for primary enforcement up to age eight and secondary enforcement for ages eight and above, unless a child is riding in a vehicle in an area not designated for passengers.

- Nebraska's Graduated Driver License (GDL) law includes the following components:
    - There are four GDL levels in Nebraska, as follows:
        - School Learner's Permit (LPE)
            - This permit is intended to prepare the applicant for the School Permit (SCP) phase.
            - The teen must be accompanied by a licensed driver who is 21 years of age or older.
            - Teens under age 16, but at least 14 years of age, are eligible for the LPE.
        - School Permit (SCP)
            - A teen may drive to and from school unsupervised or anytime when accompanied by a licensed driver who is 21 years of age or older.
            - Teens at least 14 years and two months are eligible to apply and must either provide proof of driver's education or have 50 hours of supervised driving.
        - Learner's Permit (LPD)
            - Teens at least 15 years of age that pass a written and vision test are eligible to apply for the LPD.
            - The LPD is valid for one year and the teen must be accompanied by a licensed driver who is 21 years of age or older.
        - Provisional Operator's Permit (POP)
            - Teens at least 16 years of age are eligible to apply and must either provide proof of driver's education or have 50 hours of supervised driving.
            - Teens may drive unsupervised with a POP.
            - Driving is prohibited between 12am and 6am unless coming from school activities or employment.

        - Teens are prohibited from having more than one passenger younger than 19 who is not a family member during the first six months of driving with a POP.
        - A driver must have held an LPE, LPD, or SCP for at least 6 months prior to applying for a POP.
    - Teens are not allowed to use any wireless devices while driving. The fine is $200 for the first offense, plus points are assessed on the driver's license.
    - All occupants, plus the teen driver, are required to wear a seat belt. The citation is issued to the GDL permit holder.

- Nebraska Revised Statute, NRS 60-6, 267 (7), requires the NDOT to conduct public education and information campaigns about the OP laws of the State.

- The State of Nebraska employees are required to wear a seat belt when traveling in a State-owned fleet vehicle.

- All grantees that contract with the NDOT Highway Safety Office must have an approved seat belt use policy for all employees and staff. Further, the policy must be enforced, and a copy of the policy must be provided with the grant contract proposal.

- Some Tribal Reservations in Nebraska have adopted primary seat belt laws.

- In Nebraska, citizen initiative petitions allow residents to propose new laws or constitutional amendments for a public vote, bypassing the legislature. For a constitutional amendment, the signature gathering requirement is 10 percent of the State's registered voters at the time of submission to the Secretary of State. For a statutory law change, the signature gathering requirement is seven percent of the State's registered voters at the time of submission to the Secretary of State.

2B. CHALLENGES

- Since 2019's legislative session, there have not been any improvements or updates to the body of vehicle OP laws.

- Nebraska traffic safety partners and stakeholders have advocated numerous times to encourage the legislature to consider enhancing the seat belt law to allow for primary enforcement. To date, these advocates have been unsuccessful in convincing the legislative leadership to allow the bill to pass out of Committee and move to the Senate floor for consideration.

- Local jurisdictions are unable to pass primary seat belt legislation for enforcement within the limits of the town or municipality.

- Nebraska's seat belt law doesn't include a provision requiring seat belt use in rear seating positions.

- Nebraska's seat belt law allows for three exemptions, as outlined below:
    - Persons possessing written verification from a physician that an OP system cannot be worn for medical reasons;
    - Rural letter carriers with the United States Postal Service; and
    - Emergency Medical Service providers while involved in patient care.

- A violation of the seat belt law is a $25 fine. No court costs are added to the fine, nor are points added to the violator's driver license. The fine is lower than several state seat belt laws across the country and may be contributing to the apathy of the remaining approximately 20 percent of Nebraskans that aren't buckling up. In addition, there is no provision for escalating penalties for subsequent violations of the seat belt law. Finally, a driver that allows multiple passengers to ride unbuckled is only at risk of getting one seat belt violation despite all passengers in the vehicle being unbuckled.

- It is unclear if the Nebraska state employee requirement to use a seat belt while on the job includes the use of seat belts in a rental and/or personal vehicle.

- Nebraska's child restraint system law includes several components that diminish the law's ability to best protect children traveling on Nebraska's roads, as follows:
    - The law provides for primary enforcement up to age eight and secondary enforcement for ages eight and above, unless a child is riding in a vehicle in an area not designated for passengers.
    - The law does not require children under the age of 13 to sit in the rear seat of the vehicle.
    - There is no provision for escalating penalties for subsequent violations of the child restraint system law.
    - The driver is only issued one citation in a situation when more than one child is riding unrestrained.
    - There is no provision to allow the use of child restraint system law violation fines to support education, instruction, training, or low-income programs to encourage the public to obtain and correctly use a child restraint system.
    - The law allows for the following exemptions:
        - Operators of taxicabs;
        - Vehicles manufactured before 1963 that weren't required to have OP systems;
        - Drivers in possession of a note from a licensed physician that the use of a child restraint system would be harmful to the child;
        - Drivers of emergency vehicles when operating authorized emergency vehicles; and,
        - Drivers of vehicles in parades and exhibitions.

- Nebraska's GDL law, while well intentioned, is difficult to understand, follow, and explain to teens and their parents. Four levels of permits with differing content and

requirements could equate to a teen population that is unable to grasp the prerequisites and parents that become deaf to the urgency of their role in creating safer drivers because of the complicated verbiage.

- The GDL law also includes several components that diminish the law's ability to best protect teens traveling on Nebraska's roads. Three of the four permit options can be issued to teens younger than 16 years of age. Important driving restrictions are inconsistent from permit to permit, including nighttime driving, supervised driving, passenger restrictions, and consequences for violating the GDL law. Finally, the State's GDL law is subject to secondary enforcement.

- The fines, fees, and penalties paid by unbelted drivers and other vehicle occupants are not used to support OP countermeasures. The current process for program funding is by an oversight body (legislature for the State, county commissions for their county, and city council for their city) to determine where the funding is allocated. There is an example where the State's Constitution, Section VII-5, has earmarked all fines and penalties for violation of laws prohibiting the overloading of vehicles used upon the public roads and highways to be placed as follows: Seventy-five percent in a fund for state highways and twenty-five percent to the county general fund where the fine or penalty is paid.

2C. RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Upgrade the seat belt law to be a primary offense through the legislative process or initiative petition.**

- Encourage program partners to explore the opportunity for a statewide signature petition to enhance the seat belt law for primary enforcement, including seat belt use in the rear seat and updating the fines to be commensurate with other traffic violations.

- **Increase the fine for a violation of the seat belt and child restraint laws to be commensurate with other traffic offenses such as speeding, failing to stop at a stop sign, and running a red light.**

- Enhance the Nebraska's child restraint law by implementing the following:
    - Allow for primary enforcement of all of the child restraint law provisions;
    - Require children under the age of 13 to be seated in the rear seat of the vehicle when rear seating positions are available;
    - Add increasing penalties for subsequent child restraint system law violations;
    - Allow for a citation to be issued to the driver for every child in violation of the child restraint system laws;
    - Remove the exclusions to the child restraint system law; and
    - Allow for the use of child restraint law violations fines and fees to be used for education, instruction, training, and low- or no-income programs that encourage

the public to obtain and correctly use a child restraint system.

- Restructure and improve the Nebraska's Graduated Driver License Law by implementing the following:
    - Allow for primary enforcement of all law provisions;
    - Set the permit stages as:
        - Learner Stage: supervised driving, mandatory driver education requirement, cumulating with a driving test;
        - Intermediate Stage: limiting unsupervised driving in high risk situations; and,
        - Full Privilege Stage: a standard driver license.
    - Ensure nighttime driving restrictions are imposed for the 10pm to 6am window;
    - Limit the number of teen passengers; and
    - Extend the time spent in any permit phase whenever there is a conviction of a moving violation.

- Expand the Constitutional provision for earmarking all transportation fines and fees to include child restraint citation fines, fees, and penalties to go to programs that support the purchase of child restraints for low- or no-income families.

3. LAW ENFORCEMENT

GUIDELINE:

Each State should conduct frequent, high-visibility law enforcement efforts, coupled with communication strategies, to increase seat belt and child safety seat use. Essential components of a law enforcement program should include:

- *Written, enforced seat belt use policies for law enforcement agencies with sanctions for noncompliance to protect law enforcement officers from harm and for officers to serve as role models for the motoring public;*
- *Vigorous enforcement of seat belt and child safety seat laws, including citations and warnings;*
- *Accurate reporting of occupant protection system information on police accident report forms, including seat belt and child safety seat use or non-use, restraint type, and airbag presence and deployment;*
- *Communication campaigns to inform the public about occupant protection laws and related enforcement activities;*
- *Routine monitoring of citation rates for non-use of seat belts and child safety seats;*
- *Use of National Child Passenger Safety Certification (basic and in-service) for law enforcement officers;*
- *Utilization of Law Enforcement Liaisons (LELs), for activities such as promotion of national and local mobilizations and increasing law enforcement participation in such mobilizations and collaboration with local chapters of police groups and associations that represent diverse groups (e.g., NOBLE, HAPCOA) to gain support for enforcement efforts.*

3A. STRENGTHS

- The Nebraska State Patrol (NSP) has a well-organized, comprehensive statewide traffic law enforcement program with a demonstrated commitment to training, public information, and enforcement.

- The NSP uses intelligence-led policing practices for deployment for their personnel to perform traffic law enforcement activities.

- The Nebraska Department of Transportation Highway Safety Office (NDOT HSO) has a respected and dedicated law enforcement liaison (LEL) that helps coordinate and promote grant-funded traffic law enforcement activities within the State. The LEL providing law enforcement agency outreach helps establish and maintain relationships between the HSO and law enforcement agencies around the State and will gain law enforcement support for the traffic safety mission.

- Law enforcement agencies value HSO providing Selective Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP) grant funding to perform traffic law enforcement activities.

- When the HSO provides a law enforcement agency with grant funding for equipment, there is a requirement that the agency participate in two traffic law enforcement initiatives.

- An element of the HSO *Click It or Ticket* (CIOT) enforcement tracking system reports the law enforcement agencies' pre- and post-mobilization 100-vehicle seat belt surveys. This technique is useful in the development of performance indicators for comparison and sharing with officers and key stakeholders.

- The HSO requires a seat belt use policy for law enforcement agencies participating in grant-funded activity.

- Most law enforcement agencies have procedures to guide their officers on the proper transportation of children as well as individuals in custody in patrol cars. It is common practice for Nebraska law enforcement agencies to have policies for transporting children in police vehicles.

- Many law enforcement agencies have written policies that require officers to wear seat belts.

- Nebraska law enforcement agencies use one uniform crash report to report collisions.

- The HSO routinely monitors alcohol/drug related unrestrained fatal collisions for vehicle occupants. Nationally, it has been identified that there is a relationship between unbuckled and impaired drivers.

- The HSO requires law enforcement agencies accepting OP grant funding to perform 60 percent of the grant funded activity between 3 p.m. and 12 a.m.

- The HSO annually contracts with the University of Nebraska to have an in-depth attitudinal survey (*Nebraska Annual Social Indicators Survey and Traffic Safety Findings*) completed. These data are essential to assist HSO and law enforcement agencies in the development of traffic safety intervention strategies and refining their traffic law enforcement tactics. Additionally, these data are helpful to evaluate the extent and effectiveness of traffic law enforcement activities.

3B. CHALLENGES

- In the *2022-2026 Nebraska Strategic Highway Safety Plan* (SHSP) it is referenced that zero is the only acceptable number of fatalities on Nebraska roads. It is noted in the plan "every strategy, every goal, and every statistic in this plan is focused on Nebraska's goal

toward zero deaths". However, there is no indication Nebraska has formally adopted a "Striving Towards Zero Deaths" strategy as a framework for overall planning of their traffic safety mission. This strategy has been endorsed by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, Governors Highway Safety Association, International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), National Association of County Engineers, and others as a platform of consistency to prioritize a traffic safety culture and unify law enforcement agencies to a single vision.

- Geographically, a majority of Nebraska is rural and agricultural in nature. Law enforcement agencies, specifically rural and small law enforcement agencies, are confronted with concerns about staffing and funding along with competing priorities that inhibit their ability to perform OP enforcement. The IACP defines a small law enforcement agency as one that has 50 or fewer full time sworn officers. According to the U.S. Department of Justice Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS), Nebraska has 110 municipal law enforcement agencies, 93 sheriffs' offices, and the Nebraska State Patrol, of which 95 percent meet the IACP definition of a small agency.

- There is a perception outside of grant-funded mobilizations that OP is not an emphasis for law enforcement agencies compared to other duties, resulting in an inconsistent enforcement of seat belt and child restraint laws.

- Grant-funded enforcement efforts during mobilizations appear to serve as a specific deterrence that only has a relatively small impact to modify driving behavior at that time.

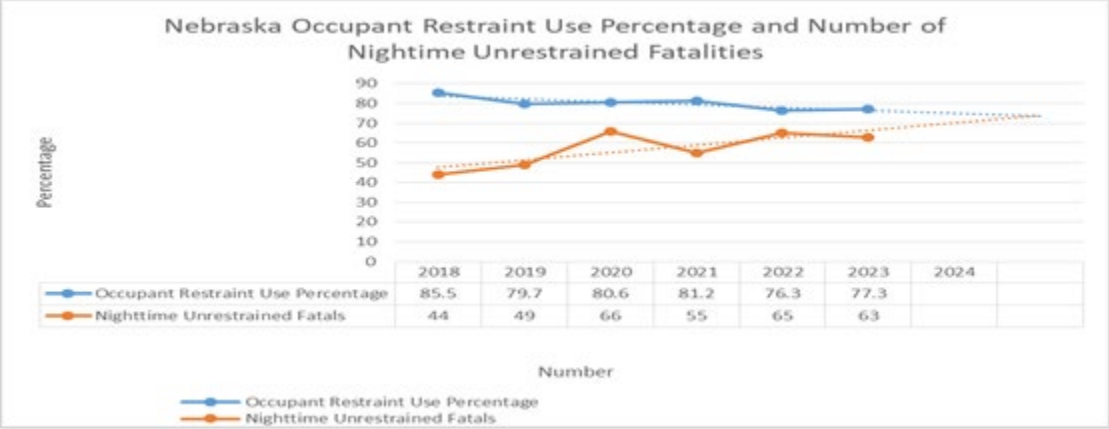
- The HSO maintains a traffic law enforcement tracking system for grant-funded initiatives. The system monitors citations issued against hours worked ratios and are evaluated to determine if future grants are merited. This type of system is a quantitative start; however, it lacks an element to analyze the qualitative value of the enforcement and refine future enforcement tactics.

- According to the *FY 2024 Nebraska Annual Report,* in 2024 the HSO funded 21,251 hours of traffic law enforcement, resulting in law enforcement making 40,069 contacts with 699 of these contacts resulting in citations for seat belt violations. The grant-funded seatbelt violations were two percent of the total violator contacts.

- According to the *FY 2024 Nebraska Annual Report* in 2023 there were 227 vehicle occupants that died in crashes, with 103 (45 percent) of these fatalities were not restrained. The societal crash cost for these unrestrained deaths was $1,359,600,000.[1] According to the U. S. Census Bureau, the population of Nebraska is 2,005,465 people. The societal cost for these deaths for every person in Nebraska was $678.00.

[1] This 2023 cost estimate is based on the Valuation of a Statistical Life in Economic Analysis value of $13,200,000 per fatality published by the U.S. DOT; https://www.transportation.gov/office policy/transportation-policy/2023-vsl-guidance

- In 2023, 61 percent of the unrestrained fatality crashes occurred during the nighttime. The hours of nighttime are defined as 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. Research has shown that seat belt use among fatally injured occupants is 18 percent lower at night.[2]



Source: FY 2024 Nebraska Annual Report

- The Nebraska seat belt law lacks comprehensiveness to mitigate risk or prevent and reduce injuries and significant consequences. The combination of the following circumstances creates the perception that seat belt enforcement is not a public safety priority:
    - Secondary enforcement for only front seat vehicle occupants,
    - No assessment of driver's license points for seat belt convictions,
    - A motorist may only be cited for a violation of the seat belt law if the officer cites the motorist for the primary traffic offense, and
    - A $25 fine for violation conviction. Studies have shown higher fines are associated with higher seat belt use and fines between $60 and $100 are likely most effective.[3]

- Strict enforcement of a primary violation and the secondary seat belt violation can be perceived as unreasonable and "piling on" to the violator. Police actions require discretion. In granting the police discretion people want to believe that the police are sincere and fair. Legislatively mandating a citation for a primary violation, when a warning would suffice, to enforce a lifesaving seat belt law may be viewed by people that the police discretion is not in good faith.

[2] Nighttime Seatbelt Enforcement Evaluation – 2010 Preusser Research Group (Tison, Williams, and Chaudhary) for National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.
[3] A 2010 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) study showed that increasing the fine for a seat belt violation from $25 to $60 would likely result in a 3-4 percentage point increase in the observed seat belt use rate. Additionally, the study found seat belt fines between $60 and $100 are likely most effective to modify behavior.

- References to the Nebraska seat belt law being "secondary" is fairly common in publications and other media. Though factual, continuing to reference the secondary nature of the law emphasizes that enforcement is restricted and limited.
- There appears to be a lack of a comprehensive seat belt law enforcement strategy supporting a general deterrent factor for seat belt use. That is, traffic law systems must rely upon general deterrence. The *Nebraska Annual Social Indicators Survey and Traffic Safety Findings 2024 Methodology Report* noted that only 27 percent of the people surveyed believed they were likely to get a "ticket" if they did not wear a seat belt.

- During CIOT enforcement mobilization times there is a social norming message communicated. This practice diminishes the strict enforcement message intended for CIOT.

- Across the United States, the media, policy makers, and the public are questioning the legitimacy of traffic law enforcement. During the 2025 Nebraska Legislative Session, Legislative Bill 222 was introduced to limit law enforcement's authority to conduct traffic stops for non-moving violations. The supporters of this legislative bill asserted this action was needed to improve traffic safety. The bill did not pass out of committee. However, there are indications the bill will be re-introduced during the next Nebraska Legislative Session.

- There doesn't appear to be any messaging or collaboration with law enforcement agencies or traffic safety partners providing public messaging on the legitimacy of traffic law enforcement supporting traffic safety to protect communities.

- Neither the Police Chiefs Association of Nebraska (PCAN) nor the Nebraska Sheriffs Association (NSA) have a traffic safety committee as part of their organization to provide recommendations and guidance to its members for the improvement of police traffic management and the promotion of traffic safety. Law enforcement professional association traffic safety committees act as advisory councils and serve as a forum for traffic safety discussion with their members.

- There was no indication of an official endorsement statement from the PCAN or NSA regarding the importance of strict seat belt enforcement. The level of support Nebraska law enforcement executives provide in prioritizing OP enforcement is unclear. Studies have found the value that law enforcement executive leadership placed on traffic enforcement tended to align with the priority that officers demonstrated. Essentially, when officers perceived their leadership and supervisors supported traffic law enforcement, the officers were motivated to perform the activity.[4]

- The common Nebraska non-seat belt user profile used for problem identification is elementary. There is a lack of information on State-specific non-seat belt user characteristics to assist law enforcement agencies to identify dangerous drivers and appropriate countermeasures, e.g., the type of behavior, criminality, crash risk, and non-

[4] See High-Visibility Enforcement: Assessing Change and Identifying Opportunities [Traffic Tech] (bts.gov).

compliant personalities of non-seat belt users. This information is essential for law enforcement agencies to develop enforcement intervention plans. It is also beneficial for developing communication plans to share with stakeholders and policymakers.

- Accessibility to State citation and adjudication data to analyze seat belt enforcement from law enforcement agencies is challenging. These data are essential to assist the HSO and law enforcement agencies in the development of traffic safety intervention strategies and refining their traffic law enforcement tactics. The lack of these data also makes it difficult for the HSO to evaluate the extent and effectiveness of traffic law enforcement programs outside of grant-funded activity.

- The annual statewide seat belt use survey is used to obtain a State seat belt use rate. These data, specific to highway type, are not provided directly to law enforcement agencies. This type of information would be a particularly useful tool for problem identification and would assist with the development of traffic law enforcement intervention strategies, deployment of staff, and evaluation of seat belt enforcement activity.

- There is a lack of a regular cadence of communication with law enforcement partners to keep the topic of OP a priority.

- There does not appear to be a regular schedule of child passenger safety training information updating officers on identification and enforcement for child restraint laws.

3C. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Identify champions within the Police Chiefs Association of Nebraska and the Nebraska Sheriffs' Association for the organizations to endorse a resolution or position statement for strict occupant protection enforcement.

- **Collaborate with the Police Chiefs Association of Nebraska and Nebraska Sheriffs' Association to develop and implement a traffic safety committee within those associations to:**
    - **act as an advisory council;**
    - **serve as a forum for discussion; and**
    - **provide recommendations to its members for the improvement of police traffic management and the promotion of traffic safety.**

- **Develop and implement a grant-funded traffic law enforcement activity evaluation methodology that identifies and prioritizes the outputs of traffic law enforcement productivity to support the Nebraska Strategic Highway Safety Plan.**

- **Develop a Law Enforcement Liaison seat belt enforcement email newsletter to be shared with key stakeholders on a quarterly basis as a progress report for necessary**

actions and a forum to recognize outstanding performance to support the Nebraska Strategic Highway Safety Plan. Essentially the seat belt newsletter is an extension of a marketing strategy. The purpose of the newsletter is to help build a brand, inform, motivate the select audience, and create value by sharing relevant and valuable information.

- Develop an in-depth behavioral risk assessment of seat belt violators and share with criminal justice professionals, traffic safety professionals, advocates, media, and policymakers.

- Create a centralized "One Stop" for law enforcement agencies featuring a user-friendly website, and a communication tool in the form of a pocket card or an "app" that would be the starting point with need-to know child restraint information.

- Upgrade the current Nebraska seat belt law to a primary violation for all vehicle seating positions for alignment to standardize with other traffic laws, taking advantage of the full intent of this life saving public policy.

- Explore developing and implementing a rural occupant protection plan like successful *High Five* programs implemented in Iowa and Kentucky. The *High Five* program works to increase seat belt usage in rural counties. The *High Five* program uses a simple formula of community intervention to focus law enforcement, education, engineering, and evaluation to improve traffic safety in rural counties.

4. COMMUNICATION

GUIDELINE:

As part of each State's communication program, the State should enlist the support of a variety of media, including mass media, to improve public awareness and knowledge and to support enforcement efforts to about seat belts, air bags, and child safety seats. To sustain or increase rates of seat belt and child safety seat use, a well-organized effectively managed communication program should:

- *Identify specific audiences (e.g., low belt use, high-risk motorists) and develop messages appropriate for these audiences;*
- *Address the enforcement of the State's seat belt and child passenger safety laws; the safety benefits of regular, correct seat belt (both manual and automatic) and child safety seat use; and the additional protection provided by air bags;*
- *Continue programs and activities to increase the use of booster seats by children who have outgrown their toddler seats but who are still too small to safely use the adult seat belts;*
- *Capitalize on special events, such as nationally recognized safety and injury prevention weeks and local enforcement campaigns;*
- *Provide materials and media campaigns in more than one language as necessary;*
- *Use national themes and materials;*
- *Participate in national programs to increase seat belt and child safety seat use and use law enforcement as the State's contribution to obtaining national public awareness through concentrated, simultaneous activity;*
- *Utilize paid media, as appropriate;*
- *Publicize seat belt use surveys and other relevant statistics;*
- *Encourage news media to report seat belt use and non-use in motor vehicle crashes;*
- *Involve media representatives in planning and disseminating communication campaigns;*
- *Encourage private sector groups to incorporate seat belt use messages into their media campaigns;*
- *Utilize and involve all media outlets: television, radio, print, signs, billboards, theaters, sports events, health fairs;*
- *Evaluate all communication campaign efforts.*

4A. STRENGTHS

- The Nebraska Department of Transportation Highway Safety Office (NDOT HSO) works with various partners to promote the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) traffic safety campaigns on various media formats.

- The Drive Smart Nebraska website provides *Share Ads* campaign materials for partners and community members to share buckle up messaging on their social media networks.

- The HSO funds the *Nebraska Annual Social Indicators Survey and Traffic Safety Findings* (NASIS) to assist with evaluating public knowledge and information of their traffic safety efforts.

- The HSO has access to comprehensive data sets and analysts to assist with identifying at-risk populations and geographic areas to target specific locations with traffic safety messaging.

- The HSO retains the services of subrecipients to:
    - create advertising spots;
    - place ad buys on radio and TV outlets as well as digital, social, and online channels; and
    - provide news releases and messaging for earned media efforts.

- The State's traffic safety partners are very passionate about improving occupant protection (OP) use within their communities. They work to establish strong relationships with a variety of individuals and organizations and strive to create effective programs that have a positive impact on the communities they serve.

- The HSO provides information and resources on the NDOT website and the Drive Smart Nebraska website.

- The HSO participates in the national *Click It or Ticket* (CIOT) mobilization, using a high visibility enforcement model that combines increased enforcement and media attention.

- Digital message boards are used across the State to provide seat belt messaging to Nebraskans traveling on their roadways.

- Sports marketing is a part of the HSO marketing efforts.

4B. CHALLENGES

- In the 2024 NASIS, 67.4 percent of the respondents have not read, seen, or heard anything about seat belt enforcement in the past 60 days.

- In the 2024 NASIS, 64.7 percent of the respondents stated they have not read, seen, or heard any child restraint messages in the past 60 days.

- The HSO subrecipients who manage marketing grants do not collaborate on the information and resources being provided and used to the public.

- The HSO and its partners provide some media centered around Child Passenger Safety Week; very little marketing and promotion of seat belts, booster seats, and child restraints occur at other times of the year.

- Data and local information from the *Nebraska Child Safety Seat Use* and *Nebraska Seat Belt Use Surveys* are posted on the HSO website but are not widely distributed or shared with partners and the public. This lack of distribution may hinder collaborative efforts to improve child restraint and seat belt usage across Nebraska, as stakeholders and community members are unable to access valuable insights from the surveys.

- Nebraska's 2025 seat belt use rate is 81.7 percent.

- Drive Smart Nebraska and the NDOT websites are not user-friendly for HSO partners or for the public.

- Outside of the NASIS, evaluation of the marketing and media efforts is limited.

4C. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Advertise, market, and expand partnerships and grant opportunities in rural communities aimed at adult-based occupant protection education and outreach, other than enforcement-based activities, to combat the overrepresentation of unrestrained fatalities on rural roads and those involving pickup truck occupants.

- **Publish and share with traffic safety advocates and subrecipients the data and information provided in the statewide observational surveys and crash data. Include relevant information and crash data specific to local communities in a usable format, and possibly develop infographics, for circulation on media platforms.**

- Conduct post-campaign media surveys to gauge the Nebraska Department of Transportation Highway Safety Office campaign effectiveness, specifically to determine if the intended audience heard/saw the messaging including all marketing purchased by subrecipients.

- Increase the number of standardized resources (e.g., online, downloadable materials, video, brochures, infographics, banners, posters) including child passenger safety information and seat check locations. Place online (Drive Smart Nebraska) in one location so the public, subrecipients, media, and law enforcement can readily locate and obtain the information.

- **Form a sub-committee, possibly under an Occupant Protection Task Force, to:**
    - **Review webpages on the Nebraska Department of Transportation and Drive Smart Nebraska websites to consolidate and combine information for easier access by the public.**
    - **Review all subrecipients' and traffic safety advocate websites and social media sites and select sites to include links on the Highway Safety Office webpages.**
    - **Develop a schedule to provide messaging to social media (Facebook, Spotify, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.) and marketing efforts for the Highway Safety Office and partners so information is updated and messaging is consistent across the State.**
    - **Add materials and resources for placement and download by public, media, and traffic safety advocates.**
    - **Include media representatives on the Occupant Protection Task Force membership.**
    - **Work towards providing a "one stop shop" for the public, traffic safety advocates, media, and law enforcement to access all things traffic safety in Nebraska in one location.**

- Analyze and evaluate the marketing campaigns for effective messaging and require subrecipients to evaluate their individual marketing efforts for their specific grants.

5. OCCUPANT PROTECTION FOR CHILDREN

GUIDELINE:

Each State should enact occupant protection laws that require the correct restraint of all children, in all seating positions and in every vehicle. Regulations and policies should exist that provide clear guidance to the motoring public concerning occupant protection for children.
Each State should require that children birth to 16 years old (or the State's driving age) be properly restrained in the appropriate child restraint system or seat belt. Gaps in State child passenger safety and seat belt laws should be closed to ensure that all children are covered in all seating positions, with requirements for age-appropriate child restraint use. Key provisions of the law should include: driver responsibility for ensuring that children are properly restrained; proper restraint of children under 13 years of age in the rear seat (unless all available rear seats are occupied by younger children); a ban of passengers from the cargo areas of light trucks; and a limit on the number of passengers based on the number of available seat belts in the vehicle.
To achieve these objectives, State occupant protection programs for children should:

- *Collect and analyze key data elements in order to evaluate the program progress;*
- *Assure that adequate and accurate training is provided to the professionals who deliver and enforce the occupant protection programs for parents and caregivers;*
- *Assure that the capability exists to train and retain nationally certified child passenger safety technicians to address attrition of trainers or changing public demographics;*
- *Promote the use of child restraints and assure that a plan has been developed to provide an adequate number of inspection stations and clinics, which meet minimum quality criteria;*
- *Maintain a strong law enforcement program that includes vigorous enforcement of the child occupant protection laws;*
- *Enlist the support of the media to increase public awareness about child occupant protection laws and the use of child restraints. Strong efforts should be made to reach underserved populations;*
- *Assure that the child occupant protection programs at the local level are periodically assessed and that programs are designed to meet the unique demographic needs of the community;*
- *Establish the infrastructure to systematically coordinate the array of child occupant protection program components;*
- *Encourage law enforcement participation in the National Child Passenger Safety Certification (basic and in-service) training for law enforcement officers.*

5A. STRENGTHS

- Nebraska's child restraint system law includes the following components:
    - Drivers are required to restrain children up to age eight in a child restraint system that meets Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 213.

- All children up to the age of two are required to use a rear-facing child restraint system until the child outgrows the manufacturer's maximum allowable height or weight.
- Children ages eight, up to the age of eighteen, are required to be restrained in a child restraint system or seat belt.
- The fine for violating the child restraint system law is $25 plus court costs and one point on the driver's license.
- The Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT) is responsible for developing and implementing a public information and education program of child restraint systems and occupant protection (OP) systems, plus a distribution and discount program for child restraint systems.
- The child restraint system law provides for primary enforcement up to age eight and secondary enforcement for ages eight and above, unless a child is riding in a vehicle in an area not designated for passengers.

- Nebraska Administrative Code for Health and Human Services Title 391 governing childcare providers, including family childcare homes, childcare centers, and preschools, require child passenger safety (CPS) training for all staff who transport children. There are 33 child passenger safety technicians (CPSTs) approved to teach the *Safe Kids Buckle Up* program.

- Nebraska has an active CPS program that is coordinated by the NDOT Highway Safety Office (HSO) in partnership with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Division of Public Health, and Safe Kids Nebraska. Many agencies and organizations collaborate to promote CPS education and provide child restraints and booster seats.

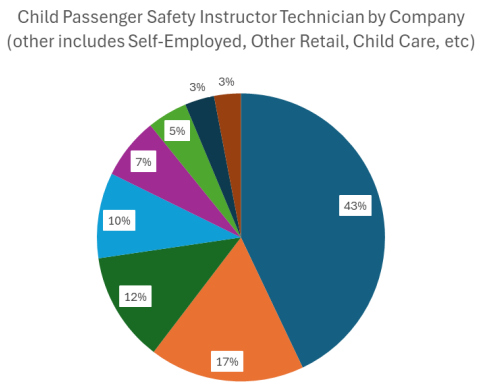
- The HSO supports the implementation of a minimum of four *National Child Passenger Safety Technician Certification Training* classes. New CPSTs receive a LATCH manual and educational resources for use in their community.

- The CPS Advisory Group, with members from the HSO, DHHS, and the child passenger safety instructors (CPSTIs), meet annually to plan and facilitate the CPS certification classes, the annual statewide technical update, and inspection station locations to meet individual community needs.

- Nebraska has 333 child passenger safety technicians (CPSTs) located in 56 of the 93 counties. The CPSTs provide access to CPS education for 94.3 percent of the child population from birth to age nine[5]. CPSTs represent a variety of disciplines:

[5] See Appendix: Table 1: Nebraska – CPS Technicians/Instructors-September 2025: Angela Osterhuber

- Hospital/Medical (143);
- Other (42);
- Non-Profit (41);
- Public Health (32);
- School/University (23);
- Law Enforcement (15);
- Safe Kids (11);
- Rescue/EMS (10);
- Self-employed (8);
- Other Retail (6);
- Child Care (1); and
- Unknown (1).



- Nebraska has 20 CPSTIs in 12 of the 93 counties providing support to the CPSTs in the State.

- Nebraska has 17 Technician Proxies (TPs) who can review and approve seat checks for CPS recertification.

- The HSO supports an annual one-day CPS training for CPSTIs and CPSTs to learn current trends and industry standards, with access to the CPS continuing education units (CEUs) to maintain certification. The LATCH Manual is also available at the annual technical update for those with an outdated version.

- The 2024 recertification rate for Nebraska CPSTs was 62.4 percent with 78 out of the 125 completing the recertification requirements. The recertification rate exceeded the national average of 50.6 percent. The Nebraska CPST recertification rate regularly exceeds the national average. The recertification rate for the last three years is provided below.

Year	Nebraska Recertification Rate	National Recertification Rate
2024	62.4 percent	50.6 percent
2023	54.5 percent	52.2 percent
2022	61.7 percent	57.1 percent

- Nebraska has a network of inspection stations to provide education on selecting, installing, and properly securing a child in a child restraint. There are 21 active child restraint inspection stations accessible by 67 of the 93 counties covering 83.7 percent of children from birth to age nine[6].

- Nebraska inspection stations use the National Digital Check Form or the Safe Kids Checklist form. Data can be retrieved from both forms to obtain critical misuse data.

[6] See Appendix: Table 2: Nebraska – CPS Inspection Stations June 4, 2025: Angela Osterhuber

- The HSO provides the LATCH Manual, law cards, supplies, and printed materials to support parent/caregiver education and outreach. Nebraska inspection stations are eligible for funding assistance to purchase child restraint systems for low-income families. Funding is available through mini-grant applications found on the HSO website.

- The Nebraska CPS program hosted additional community car seat check events, 30 in 2024 and 25 in 2025, to provide education and assistance for families.

- Forty-seven CPSTs and CPSTIs in 18 counties have attended the *"Safe Travel for All Children: Transporting Children with Special Health Care Needs"* class. Four of the 47 have completed the requirements to teach this enhancement class.

- There is a procedure for transporting children in police vehicles and that child restraints are available, if needed.

- The HSO developed messaging for Child Passenger Safety Week 2025 and will participate in a media event held at an inspection station on Seat Check Saturday. The HSO, DHHS, and Safe Kids Nebraska are supporting multiple car seat check events during National Child Passenger Safety Week.

- A bi-annual *Nebraska Child Safety Seat Use Survey* is conducted to measure child restraint/booster seat use. In 2023, the child restraint use rate for children secured in a child restraint/booster seat was 87.3 percent. The survey also found that 99.0 percent of those children were secured in a back seat.

5B. CHALLENGES

- Nebraska's child restraint system law includes several components that diminish the law's ability to best protect children traveling on Nebraska's roads, as follows:
    - The law provides for primary enforcement up to age eight and secondary enforcement for ages eight and above, unless a child is riding in a vehicle in an area not designated for passengers.
    - The law does not require children under the age of 13 to sit in the rear seat of the vehicle.
    - There is no provision for escalating penalties for subsequent violations of the child restraint system law.
    - The driver is only issued one citation in a situation when more than one child is riding unrestrained.
    - There is no provision to allow the use of child restraint system law violation fines to support education, instruction, training, or low-income programs to encourage the public to obtain and correctly use a child restraint system.
    - The law allows for the following exemptions:
        - Operators of taxicabs;
        - Vehicles manufactured before 1963 that weren't required to have OP

systems;
    - Drivers in possession of a note from a licensed physician that the use of a child restraint system would be harmful to the child;
    - Drivers of emergency vehicles when operating authorized emergency vehicles; and
    - Drivers of vehicles in a parade or exhibition.

- Nebraska is a large rural state with great distances between communities. With no formalized mentoring program in place, this makes it difficult to mentor new CPSTIs, TPs, CPSTs, and recruit CPS instructor candidates in the more rural areas of the State.
    - Thirty-seven of the 93 counties do not have a CPST.
    - Twenty-six of the 93 counties do not have an assigned inspection station. (Refer to tables in the Appendix).
        - There are some inspection stations that provide services to multiple counties that cover a large area.
    - There are limited in-person opportunities for CPSTs to meet the CPS recertification requirements. Limited access to a CPSTI or TP for seat check activity sign-offs may be a barrier to meeting the recertification requirements.

- There does not appear to be a strategy to assess and identify underserved communities to determine an adequate number of CPSTs and inspection stations.

- Analysis of misuse data recorded at inspection stations and community car seat inspections to determine common errors is limited.

- There does not appear to be a standardized basic CPS training program available for law enforcement officers, who are not CPSTs, on the identification of misuse and enforcement.

- It is unknown if all hospitals in Nebraska have discharge policies that include CPS information to inform parents of the State's child restraint law or best practice recommendations for the safe transportation of children.

- There was little evidence that community-based health care providers (e.g., pediatricians, primary care providers) are fully engaged in CPS promotion (e.g., with information to help counsel families and refer them to a local car seat distribution program and/or a nearby inspection station).

- There appears to be limited CPS educational flyers and brochures that can be distributed to medical facilities, schools, school transportation, community agencies, and businesses.

- Agencies are encouraged to participate in CPS Week, but there does not appear to be a coordinated statewide campaign for CPS Week and Seat Check Saturday.

- Currently, there are no easily accessible crash data reports comparing the number of fatalities and injuries and child restraint types for children from birth to age eight. These

reports may provide guidance for program priorities and messaging.

5C. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Strengthen the Nebraska child restraint law by removing exemptions and following best practice recommendations.

- **Evaluate whether the number of child passenger safety technicians and inspection stations in Nebraska counties, based on population, is sufficient to meet community needs. Identify communities that are underserved and develop a plan to address the needs. (See Appendix for an example of a tool to determine underserved communities.)**

- Provide the *National Child Passenger Safety Technician Certification Training* hybrid course for rural areas of the State.

- Provide virtual car seat checks to increase access for families who live in rural communities.

- **Enhance communication between child passenger safety technician instructors, child passenger safety technicians, and technician proxies throughout Nebraska.**
    - **Create a sustainable mentoring network to support newly certified child passenger safety technician instructors, technicians, and technician proxies.**
    - **Recruit experienced child passenger safety technicians to become technician proxies who can observe and approve the required seat checks for recertification, particularly in counties that do not have a child passenger safety instructor or technician proxy.**
    - **Maintain current statewide inspection stations and increase the number of inspection stations in additional geographic locations as needed.**

- Promote use of the *Car Seat Basics for Law Enforcement* course to equip law enforcement officers with knowledge to:
    - take an active role in assessing car seat use according to evidence-based best practices,
    - talk to caregivers about child passenger safety, and
    - share child passenger safety local and national resources with caregivers—all within the context of regular officer duties.

- Develop and implement an educational program for Nebraska's hospitals. Conduct a survey to determine if they have:
    - Written child passenger safety discharge policies and protocols;
    - Standardized training for hospital staff; and
    - Educational materials and services to provide child passenger safety best practice recommendations for parents.

- Encourage hospitals to implement a discharge policy to inform parents of the child restraint law and child passenger safety best practice recommendations. Provide a draft policy (e.g. Hospital Discharge Recommendations for Safe Transportation of Children) to assist them in determining components of a policy that meets child passenger safety best practice recommendations. https://www.cpsboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Checklist-for-Hospital-Discharge-Recommendations-for-Safe-Transportation-of-Children.pdf

- Develop and implement a child passenger safety presentation that is message-appropriate for physicians, based on the American Academy of Pediatrics "Policy Statement on Child Passenger Safety". Explore whether a continuing medical education/continuing education unit can be obtained for the presentation to entice physicians, medical professionals, and office staff to attend the training. Training can be offered at hospital grand rounds, physician practices, or by webinar. https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/142/5/e20182460/38530/Child-Passenger-Safety?searchresult=1

- Utilize the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Child Passenger Safety Week materials (educational messages and resources, template media materials, etc.), tailoring them to include the statewide theme and data. Encourage use of these materials by partners and stakeholders to increase participation and consistency of messaging.

- Develop standardized reports of child passenger injuries and fatalities by jurisdiction based on crash data. The report should include at a minimum:
    - The number of fatalities and injuries;
    - Type of restraint used;
    - Age of occupant;
    - Seating position in the vehicle; and
    - Airbag deployment.

  Make the data available to child passenger safety technician instructors, child passenger safety technicians, subrecipients, and traffic safety partners.

6. OUTREACH PROGRAM

GUIDELINE:

Each state should encourage extensive statewide and community involvement in occupant protection education by involving individuals and organizations outside the traditional highway safety community. Representation from health, business, education, and diverse cultures of the community are encouraged, among others. Community involvement broadens public support for the state's programs and can increase a state's ability to deliver highway safety education programs. To encourage statewide and community involvement, States should:

- *Establish a coalition or task force of individuals and organizations to actively promote use of occupant protection systems;*
- *Create an effective communications network among coalition members to keep members informed about issues;*
- *Provide culturally relevant materials and resources necessary to conduct occupant protection education programs, especially directed toward young people, in local settings;*
- *Provide materials and resources necessary to conduct occupant protection education programs, especially directed toward specific cultural or otherwise diverse populations represented in the State and in its political subdivisions.*

States should undertake a variety of outreach programs to achieve statewide and community involvement in occupant protection education, as described below. Programs should include outreach to diverse populations, health and medical communities, schools and employers.

a. Diverse Populations

Each State should work closely with individuals and organizations that represent the various ethnic and cultural populations reflected in State demographics. Individuals from these groups might not be reached through traditional communication markets. Community leaders and representatives from the various ethnic and cultural groups and organizations will help States to increase the use of child safety seats and seat belts. The State should:

- *Evaluate the need for, and provide, if necessary, materials and resources in multiple languages;*
- *Collect and analyze data on fatalities and injuries in diverse communities;*
- *Ensure representation of diverse groups on State occupant protection coalitions and other work groups;*
- *Provide guidance to grantees on conducting outreach in diverse communities;*
- *Utilize leaders from diverse communities as spokespeople to promote seat belt use and child safety seat;*
- *Conduct outreach efforts to diverse organizations and populations during law enforcement mobilization periods.*

b. Health and Medical Communities

Each State should integrate occupant protection into health programs. The failure of drivers and passengers to use occupant protection systems is a major public health problem that must be recognized by the medical and health care communities. The SHSO, the State Health Department and other State or local medical organizations should collaborate in developing programs that:

- *Integrate occupant protection into professional health training curricula and comprehensive public health planning;*
- *Promote occupant protection systems as a health promotion/injury prevention measure;*
- *Require public health and medical personnel to use available motor vehicle occupant protection systems during work hours;*
- *Provide technical assistance and education about the importance of motor vehicle occupant protection to primary caregivers (e.g., doctors, nurses, clinic staff);*
- *Include questions about seat belt use in health risk appraisals;*
- *Utilize health care providers as visible public spokespeople for seat belt and child safety seat use;*
- *Provide information about the availability of child safety seats at, and integrate child safety seat inspections into, maternity hospitals and other prenatal and natal care centers;*
- *Collect, analyze and publicize data on additional injuries and medical expenses resulting from non-use of occupant protection devices.*

c. Schools

Each State should encourage local school boards and educators to incorporate occupant protection education into school curricula. The SHSO in cooperation with the State Department of Education should:

- *Ensure that highway safety and traffic-related injury control, in general, and occupant protection, in particular, are included in the State-approved K-12 health and safety education curricula and textbooks;*
- *Establish and enforce written policies requiring that school employees use seat belts when operating a motor vehicle on the job; and*
- *Encourage active promotion of regular seat belt use through classroom and extracurricular activities as well as in school-based health clinics;*
- *Work with School Resource Officers (SROs) to promote seat belt use among high school students; and*
- *Establish and enforce written school policies that require students driving to and from school to wear seat belts. Violation of these policies should result in revocation of parking or other campus privileges for a stated period of time.*

d. Employers

Each State and local subdivision should encourage all employers to require seat belt use on the job as a condition of employment. Private sector employers should follow the lead of Federal and State government employers and comply with Executive Order 13043, "Increasing Seat Belt Use in the United States" as well as all applicable Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) Regulations or Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations requiring private business employees to use seat belts on the job. All employers should:

- *Establish and enforce a seat belt use policy with sanctions for non-use;*
- *Conduct occupant protection education programs for employees on their seat belt use policies and the safety benefits of motor vehicle occupant protection devices.*

6A. STRENGTHS

- Nebraska uses *Teens in the Driver Seat*, a peer-to-peer program for teens that focuses solely on traffic safety and addresses all major risks for junior high and high school students.

- The Nebraska Department of Transportation Highway Safety Office (NDOT HSO) supports a table tent campaign to spread local data and information to counties within the State.

- The HSO and its subrecipients provide resources on all traffic safety areas including materials in languages other than English.

- Public health departments across the State have a dedicated working relationship with the HSO.

- Nebraska's 2025 Highway Safety Summit provided education, resources, and collaboration for the HSO partners and subrecipients.

- *Project Nightlife*, an enforcement and education program, has been able to reach over 4,800 students with traffic safety presentations in the Omaha area.

- The HSO has worked with traffic safety advocates to ensure the safety of Nebraska's children while traveling in a motor vehicle. There are a variety of child passenger safety programs targeting younger children to ensure they are using the appropriate child restraint for their age and size and provide no-cost child restraints for low-income families.

- The HSO provides mini-grants for agencies to use the Seat Belt Persuader for events.

6B. CHALLENGES

- The *Teens in the Driver Seat* program has expanded to only 23 schools in Nebraska.

- Outreach resources such as educational pamphlets and traffic safety information including crash statistics are distributed/developed across both the HSO and subrecipient sites throughout the State, which can lead to inconsistent access and messaging for the public.

- No strategy exists to leverage social media used by subrecipients and partners for wider HSO education, messaging, or programming.

- The NDOT and Drive Smart Nebraska websites do not provide sufficient information on occupant protection (OP) and child passenger safety (CPS) programs or resources, nor do they provide links to subrecipients, partners, and stakeholders across the range of traffic safety programs, including OP. Without these resources, users may struggle to find reliable information on CPS or connect with local support programs, potentially reducing overall traffic safety awareness and compliance.

- It is unclear if there are written and enforceable policies requiring school employees and students to use seat belts when operating a motor vehicle to and from school and school events.

- Outside of the *Teens in the Driver Seat* program, there appears to be minimal traffic safety information being presented to youth.

- There has been little opportunity for collaboration on OP and CPS issues by the HSO, statewide organizations, subrecipients, and community leaders.

- While the HSO collaborates with local health departments, there is currently no specific initiative to engage physicians, nurses, or clinics in delivering traffic safety education to community members.

6C. RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Expand proven programs like *Teens in the Driver Seat* and *Project Nightlife*.**

- **Engage existing and new *Teens in the Driver Seat* programs to encourage seat belt policies for students, school employees, and businesses in their areas.**

- Reorganize membership of an Occupant Protection Task Force making sure to include Department of Education, School Resource Officers, law enforcement organizations, medical community, and minority and faith-based leaders. Establish a consistent meeting time and provide both in-person and virtual opportunities to attend.

- **Task a team, possibly a sub-committee of an Occupant Protection Task Force, to:**
    - **develop standardized presentations or programs for different age groups which meet the Nebraska Department of Education Standards for easier access to the school classrooms.**
    - **research avenues to reach the medical communities in the State to further traffic safety messaging with their patients.**
    - **develop short video interviews with education, medical, minority, and faith-based leaders regarding the importance of seat belt use and child restraints for display on local community social media channels.**

7. DATA AND EVALUATION

GUIDELINE:

Each State should access and analyze reliable data sources for problem identification and program planning. Each State should conduct several different types of evaluation to effectively measure progress and to plan and implement new program strategies. Program management should:

- *Conduct and publicize at least one statewide observational survey of seat belt and child safety seat use annually, making every effort to ensure that it meets current, applicable Federal guidelines;*
- *Maintain trend data on child safety seat use, seat belt use and air bag deployment in fatal crashes;*
- *Identify high-risk populations through observational usage surveys and crash statistics;*
- *Conduct and publicize statewide surveys of public knowledge and attitudes about occupant protection laws and systems;*
- *Obtain monthly or quarterly data from law enforcement agencies on the number of seat belt and child passenger safety citations and convictions;*
- *Evaluate the use of program resources and the effectiveness of existing general communication as well as special/high-risk population education programs;*
- *Obtain data on morbidity, as well as the estimated cost of crashes, and determine the relation of injury to seat belt use and non-use;*
- *Ensure that evaluation results are an integral part of new program planning and problem identification.*

7A. STRENGTHS

- The Nebraska Department of Transportation Highway Safety Office (NDOT HSO) utilizes police-reported motor vehicle crash data for the development of strategies and the identification of populations for the State's highway safety plans. Improving occupant protection (OP) is a key component of these plans.

- NDOT has one consolidated crash database which collects information from all law enforcement agencies across the State.

- Approximately 93 percent of crash reports and traffic citations are submitted electronically to a central repository from law enforcement agencies across the State.

- Nebraska has an active Traffic Records Coordinating Committee that supports HSO data collection, analysis, and integration efforts.

- Several key statewide data sets are available to support problem identification and

program evaluation activities. These include police crash report data; Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) data; citation and adjudication data; driver licensing data; attitudinal surveys; health data; and child restraint inspection data. The HSO and their partners utilize these data to develop and support education and communications campaigns.

- The Nebraska Ambulance Rescue Service Information System (eNARSIS) data are collected through the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Service's (DHHS) Office of Emergency Health Systems. eNARSIS data, along with hospital discharge data also managed by DHHS, are available to support highway safety programs, including OP.

- eNARSIS is NEMSIS 3.4 compliant and includes data elements related to seating position and occupant safety equipment.

- Nebraska Trauma Registry data are available through the Nebraska DHHS through a data request and approval process.

- Nebraska participates in the Crash Outcome Data Evaluation System (CODES) program. Efforts are underway to increase linkages between crash, EMS, and hospital data for recent years. Once completed, these efforts will provide additional information regarding morbidity and costs related to injured motor vehicle occupants.

- The Nebraska Transportation Information Portal (NTIP) contains aggregate data reports related to the State's primary highway safety emphasis areas along with a crash data dashboard and mapping application that provides users with the ability to perform general queries. General data support and response to data requests is provided to the highway safety community through NDOT and the HSO.

- The NTIP website provides year-to-date fatality numbers broken down by several categories including urban/rural, vehicle type, and roadway type.

- The HSO uses crash data to identify priority counties for highway safety programming. The rankings are based on both raw numbers and rates per 100 million vehicle miles traveled. The county's observed seat belt use is included as a metric.

- The NDOT has developed performance measures to support the State's *Strategic Highway Safety Plan*'s emphasis areas. While these measures are largely based on fatality numbers, they provide interim targets to strive for as part of Nebraska's goal to reach zero roadway safety deaths.

- OP is identified as a primary component of the State's *Strategic Highway Safety Plan* and its *Triennial Highway Safety Plan*.

- The State's *Triennial Highway Safety Plan* has identified two goals to be attained by December 31, 2026:
    - Increase the OP use rate to 80.7 percent.
    - Decrease the number of unrestrained fatalities to 97.

- The Nebraska Highway Safety Conference provides a forum to provide data and evaluation information to traffic safety professionals. The 2025 conference included a session on child passenger safety and seat belt educational and enforcement efforts.

- The HSO-funded *Teens in the Driver Seat* program illustrates how crash data are used to shape highway safety efforts. This teen-led, peer-to-peer initiative focuses on risk factors identified in crash data, including low seat belt use, distractions, and nighttime driving.

- Each law enforcement grantee of the HSO tracks and submits information related to the number of citations issued during their high visibility enforcement campaigns. Law enforcement agencies are also encouraged to conduct seat belt observations before and after specifically funded activities.

- The State's law enforcement agencies have access to their agency's crash and citation data. Many local agencies use these data to identify high-risk corridors and inform patrol and enforcement activities.

- Fatality review teams are used by the State to help understand the circumstances around incidents of child fatality, including fatalities resulting from motor vehicle crashes, and to recommend strategies to prevent future events.

- The annual seat belt observation survey is conducted by the Bureau of Sociological Research (BOSR) at the University of Nebraska. The survey is conducted immediately following the annual *Click It or Ticket* (CIOT) campaign and gathers restraint use information for drivers and front seat outboard passengers. The observed seat belt use rate in Nebraska was 81.7 percent in 2025, a moderate increase from the previous year.

- BOSR staff are responsible for observer training, quality control of data collection, and calculation of the final observed use rate. An executive summary of the survey report is provided to HSO annually. Nebraska's current sampling of roadway segments was completed and approved by NHTSA in 2022.

- BOSR conducts a bi-annual observation of child restraint use. In 2023, 87 percent of the children observed were using a child restraint or a booster seat.

- The *Nebraska Annual Social Indicators Survey*, conducted by BOSR, used a stratified sample to reach 10,000 households in 2024 with a response rate of 23

percent. The survey includes multiple questions related to highway safety, with several specifically asking about seat belt use.

- Data collected through the Nebraska Safe Kids car seat inspection stations are used to identify the extent of car seats that are improperly installed, helping to flag common misuse patterns and improve education efforts.

7B. CHALLENGES

- Nebraska had a total of 252 roadway fatalities in 2024. Identifying the risk factors and characteristics associated with those fatalities will require ongoing analysis of the State's available highway safety data.

- Data from NHTSA's FARS revealed that Nebraska had 173 passenger vehicle occupant fatalities in 2023. For those fatalities with known restraint use, 69 percent were unrestrained.

- Information on restraint use for non-fatal crashes is often dependent on self-report. The reliance on restraint use, as recorded on crash reports, may not accurately reflect the belt use rate of a particular region or county.

- Observed seat belt use was 81.7 percent in 2025. The survey does not distinguish between passenger vehicles and pickup trucks, limiting HSO's ability to develop messaging directed at pickup truck drivers and passengers, which have historically shown lower seat belt use rates.

- Data for the Seat Belt Use Report are collected over a two-to-three-week period after the conclusion of the State's CIOT campaign. The methodology utilizes a two-stage sampling frame that concentrates the observations to just nine of Nebraska's 93 counties. While this is a valid process, it limits the amount of information that is available to the more rural parts of the State.

- The crash report software program implemented in 2021 has been plagued with quality control issues. As a result, there have been no standardized reports using non-fatal crash data produced in the last several years and many of the reports on the NTIP website are significantly out of date. This delay has also hampered the ability of the CODES program staff to provide up-to-date integrations of the crash data with other traffic records system components.

- The geospatial component of the NTIP website only contains data prior to December 31, 2020, and there are limited flags related to driver behavior available through the queries.

- Citation data may be available from local agencies; however, statewide citation data are not available to the HSO as a tool to help evaluate the effectiveness of their

highway safety programs.

- The HSO makes available crash and citation data collection software to interested agencies at no cost. However, not all law enforcement agencies avail themselves of this opportunity.

- Agencies who write more than 500 citations per year are required by the State's Supreme Court to submit the information electronically to the Nebraska Crime Commission. However, agencies who issue fewer than 500 citations annually may continue to submit paper copies.

- Law enforcement agencies cannot readily see a driver's citation/warning history during a traffic stop. Having ready access to this information can better inform an officer's decision to write a citation.

- The most recent Social Indicators Survey (2024) indicated that only one-third of the respondents thought they were likely/very likely to receive a citation for not wearing a seat belt.

7C. RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Correct the analytical challenges within the State's crash reporting system. Having near real-time data available to the highway safety partners will promote improved problem identification and program evaluation efforts.**

- Enhance the Nebraska Transportation Information Portal and its dashboard to include additional information on vehicle occupants, including restraint use. Develop user-friendly interfaces to increase its use by highway safety partners and community members interested in promoting highway safety and update the available canned reports to fill the 2021–2024 calendar years.

- Provide additional data elements in the geospatial mapping tool that will allow users to refine their queries to identify specific sub-groups of interest (e.g., teen drivers).

- Establish a memorandum of understanding with the Nebraska Crime Commission for access to statewide citation data. Once established, use the information provided to demonstrate the need for electronic submission of citations by all law enforcement agencies in Nebraska.

- Expand the observational seat belt survey to allow for the identification of pickup trucks.

- **Include additional seat belt observation sites in counties that are not part of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's sample as part of the**

Bureau of Sociological Research's annual survey. The sites can be conveniently selected to ensure sufficient vehicle count. If feasible, rotate the included counties each year to provide observational seat belt use data to jurisdictions throughout the State.

APPENDIX

Table 1: Nebraska CPS Technicians/Instructors

Nebraska - CPS Technicians / Instructors (Safe Kids Certification: 9/9/2025)

County	Population 0-5 (Census*)	% of State Population	Population 5-9 (Census*)	% of State Population	Population 0-9 (Census*)	% of State Population	CPS Techs	Estimated Tech. hours/year (2% = 40 hrs/yr)	Basic 1 tech hour per 180 children	Intermediate 1 tech hour per 90 children	Comprehensive 1 tech hour per 12 children	Basic 1 tech hour per 180 children	Intermediate 1 tech hour per 90 children	Comprehensive1 tech hour per 12 children	CPS Instructors	Technician Proxy	Safe Travel for All Children	CPS on School Bus	Spanish Speaking
State Population	124,273	100.00%	130,781	100.00%	255,055	100.00%	333								20	17	47	1	22
Adams	2,006	1.61%	2,009	1.54%	4,015	1.57%	16	640	11	22	167	22	45	335	1		1		2
Antelope	417	0.34%	494	0.38%	911	0.36%		0	2	5	35	5	10	76					
Arthur	34	0.03%	43	0.03%	77	0.03%	1	40	0	0	3	0	1	6					
Banner	44	0.04%	35	0.03%	79	0.03%		0	0	0	4	0	1	7					
Blaine	22	0.02%	24	0.02%	46	0.02%		0	0	0	2	0	1	4					
Boone	314	0.25%	347	0.27%	661	0.26%	1	40	2	3	26	4	7	55					
Box Butte	561	0.45%	736	0.56%	1,297	0.51%	3	120	3	6	47	7	14	108					
Boyd	68	0.05%	78	0.06%	146	0.06%		0	0	1	6	1	2	12					
Brown	173	0.14%	163	0.12%	336	0.13%		0	1	2	14	2	4	28					
Buffalo	3,039	2.45%	3,186	2.44%	6,225	2.44%	18	720	17	34	253	35	69	519		1	1		2
Burt	344	0.28%	419	0.32%	763	0.30%		0	2	4	29	4	8	64					
Butler	477	0.38%	564	0.43%	1,041	0.41%		0	3	5	40	6	12	87					
Cass	1,473	1.19%	1,777	1.36%	3,250	1.27%	2	80	8	16	123	18	36	271					
Cedar	528	0.42%	655	0.50%	1,183	0.46%		0	3	6	44	7	13	99					
Chase	228	0.18%	312	0.24%	540	0.21%		0	1	3	19	3	6	45					
Cherry	320	0.26%	454	0.35%	774	0.30%	2	80	2	4	27	4	9	65					
Cheyenne	547	0.44%	581	0.44%	1,128	0.44%	4	160	3	6	46	6	13	94		1	2		
Clay	392	0.32%	369	0.28%	761	0.30%	5	200	2	4	33	4	8	63	1	1			
Colfax	848	0.68%	919	0.70%	1,767	0.69%	1	40	5	9	71	10	20	147					
Cuming	692	0.56%	637	0.49%	1,329	0.52%	5	200	4	8	58	7	15	111					1
Custer	705	0.57%	605	0.46%	1,310	0.51%	2	80	4	8	59	7	15	109					
Dakota	1,789	1.44%	1,810	1.38%	3,599	1.41%	2	80	10	20	149	20	40	300					
Dawes	446	0.36%	314	0.24%	760	0.30%		0	2	5	37	4	8	63					
Dawson	1,876	1.51%	1,910	1.46%	3,786	1.48%	4	160	10	21	156	21	42	316					3
Deuel	117	0.09%	71	0.05%	188	0.07%		0	1	1	10	1	2	16					
Dixon	347	0.28%	389	0.30%	736	0.29%		0	2	4	29	4	8	61					
Dodge	2,377	1.91%	2,478	1.89%	4,855	1.90%	10	400	13	26	198	27	54	405			1		4
Douglas	39,122	31.48%	39,113	29.91%	78,235	30.67%	69	2760	217	435	3260	435	869	6520	4	1	13		2
Dundy	133	0.11%	119	0.09%	252	0.10%		0	1	1	11	1	3	21					
Fillmore	332	0.27%	272	0.21%	604	0.24%	2	80	2	4	28	3	7	50					
Franklin	158	0.13%	175	0.13%	333	0.13%		0	1	2	13	2	4	28					
Frontier	139	0.11%	165	0.13%	304	0.12%	1	40	1	2	12	2	3	25					
Furnas	264	0.21%	281	0.21%	545	0.21%		0	1	3	22	3	6	45					
Gage	1,179	0.95%	1,285	0.98%	2,464	0.97%	2	80	7	13	98	14	27	205					
Garden	49	0.04%	50	0.04%	99	0.04%		0	0	1	4	1	1	8					
Garfield	86	0.07%	117	0.09%	203	0.08%	3	120	0	1	7	1	2	17		1	1		
Gosper	89	0.07%	88	0.07%	177	0.07%		0	0	1	7	1	2	15					

Nebraska - CPS Technicians / Instructors (Safe Kids Certification: 9/9/2025)

County	Population 0-5 (Census*)	% of State Population	Population 5-9 (Census*)	% of State Population	Population 0-9 (Census*)	% of State Population	CPS Techs	Estimated Tech. hours/year (2% = 40 hrs/yr)	Basic 1 tech hour per 180 children	Intermediate 1 tech hour per 90 children	Comprehensive 1 tech hour per 12 children	Basic 1 tech hour per 180 children	Intermediate 1 tech hour per 90 children	Comprehensive1 tech hour per 12 children	CPS Instructors	Technician Proxy	Safe Travel for All Children	CPS on School Bus	Spanish Speaking
Grant	50	0.04%	22	0.02%	72	0.03%		0	0	1	4	0	1	6					
Greeley	136	0.11%	137	0.10%	273	0.11%		0	1	2	11	2	3	23					
Hall	4,705	3.79%	4,357	3.33%	9,062	3.55%	10	400	26	52	392	50	101	755	1	2	2		1
Hamilton	581	0.47%	608	0.46%	1,189	0.47%	4	160	3	6	48	7	13	99		1			
Harlan	175	0.14%	233	0.18%	408	0.16%	1	40	1	2	15	2	5	34					
Hayes	48	0.04%	68	0.05%	116	0.05%		0	0	1	4	1	1	10					
Hitchcock	160	0.13%	122	0.09%	282	0.11%		0	1	2	13	2	3	24					
Holt	657	0.53%	603	0.46%	1,260	0.49%	8	320	4	7	55	7	14	105	1		2		
Hooker	25	0.02%	21	0.02%	46	0.02%		0	0	0	2	0	1	4					
Howard	442	0.36%	393	0.30%	835	0.33%		0	2	5	37	5	9	70					
Jefferson	418	0.34%	497	0.38%	915	0.36%	1	40	2	5	35	5	10	76		1			
Johnson	250	0.20%	249	0.19%	499	0.20%	2	80	1	3	21	3	6	42					
Kearney	411	0.33%	304	0.23%	715	0.28%	4	160	2	5	34	4	8	60					
Keith	375	0.30%	557	0.43%	932	0.37%	1	40	2	4	31	5	10	78			1		
Keya Paha	45	0.04%	64	0.05%	109	0.04%		0	0	1	4	1	1	9					
Kimball	133	0.11%	242	0.19%	375	0.15%	1	40	1	1	11	2	4	31					
Knox	497	0.40%	518	0.40%	1,015	0.40%		0	3	6	41	6	11	85					
Lancaster	18,467	14.86%	19,416	14.85%	37,883	14.85%	45	1800	103	205	1539	210	421	3157	5	4	11	1	2
Lincoln	1,915	1.54%	2,182	1.67%	4,097	1.61%	12	480	11	21	160	23	46	341	1		2		
Logan	50	0.04%	61	0.05%	111	0.04%		0	0	1	4	1	1	9					
Loup	25	0.02%	29	0.02%	54	0.02%		0	0	0	2	0	1	5					
Madison	2,498	2.01%	2,661	2.03%	5,159	2.02%	3	120	14	28	208	29	57	430					
McPherson	13	0.01%	10	0.01%	23	0.01%		0	0	0	1	0	0	2					
Merrick	440	0.35%	468	0.36%	908	0.36%	3	120	2	5	37	5	10	76					
Morrill	287	0.23%	228	0.17%	515	0.20%	1	40	2	3	24	3	6	43					
Nance	184	0.15%	216	0.17%	400	0.16%		0	1	2	15	2	4	33					
Nemaha	400	0.32%	343	0.26%	743	0.29%	2	80	2	4	33	4	8	62	1		1		
Nuckolls	195	0.16%	218	0.17%	413	0.16%	4	160	1	2	16	2	5	34					
Otoe	907	0.73%	1,042	0.80%	1,949	0.76%	2	80	5	10	76	11	22	162	1				
Pawnee	176	0.14%	143	0.11%	319	0.13%		0	1	2	15	2	4	27					
Perkins	151	0.12%	257	0.20%	408	0.16%		0	1	2	13	2	5	34					
Phelps	576	0.46%	701	0.54%	1,277	0.50%	1	40	3	6	48	7	14	106					
Pierce	518	0.42%	542	0.41%	1,060	0.42%		0	3	6	43	6	12	88					
Platte	2,343	1.89%	2,598	1.99%	4,941	1.94%	7	280	13	26	195	27	55	412					1
Polk	268	0.22%	241	0.18%	509	0.20%	1	40	1	3	22	3	6	42					
Red Willow	659	0.53%	634	0.48%	1,293	0.51%	6	240	4	7	55	7	14	108		2			
Richardson	394	0.32%	464	0.35%	858	0.34%	4	160	2	4	33	5	10	72					
Rock	79	0.06%	89	0.07%	168	0.07%		0	0	1	7	1	2	14					
Saline	984	0.79%	898	0.69%	1,882	0.74%	3	120	5	11	82	10	21	157			2		1

Nebraska - CPS Technicians / Instructors (Safe Kids Certification: 9/9/2025)

County	Population 0-5 (Census*)	% of State Population	Population 5-9 (Census*)	% of State Population	Population 0-9 (Census*)	% of State Population	CPS Techs	Estimated Tech. hours/year (2% = 40 hrs/yr)	Basic 1 tech hour per 180 children	Intermediate 1 tech hour per 90 children	Comprehensive 1 tech hour per 12 children	Basic 1 tech hour per 180 children	Intermediate 1 tech hour per 90 children	Comprehensive1 tech hour per 12 children	CPS Instructors	Technician Proxy	Safe Travel for All Children	CPS on School Bus	Spanish Speaking
Sarpy	12,438	10.01%	14,597	11.16%	27,035	10.60%	12	480	69	138	1037	150	300	2253	1		2		
Saunders	1,415	1.14%	1,550	1.19%	2,965	1.16%	2	80	8	16	118	16	33	247			1		
Scotts Bluff	2,262	1.82%	2,684	2.05%	4,946	1.94%	10	400	13	25	189	27	55	412	1				2
Seward	968	0.78%	1,082	0.83%	2,050	0.80%	4	160	5	11	81	11	23	171			1		
Sheridan	307	0.25%	348	0.27%	655	0.26%		0	2	3	26	4	7	55					
Sherman	172	0.14%	130	0.10%	302	0.12%	3	120	1	2	14	2	3	25					
Sioux	95	0.08%	73	0.06%	168	0.07%		0	1	1	8	1	2	14					
Stanton	330	0.27%	402	0.31%	732	0.29%	2	80	2	4	28	4	8	61			2		
Thayer	264	0.21%	313	0.24%	577	0.23%	2	80	1	3	22	3	6	48					
Thomas	19	0.02%	43	0.03%	62	0.02%		0	0	0	2	0	1	5					
Thurston	613	0.49%	635	0.49%	1,248	0.49%	9	360	3	7	51	7	14	104	2	1			1
Valley	235	0.19%	273	0.21%	508	0.20%	1	40	1	3	20	3	6	42					
Washington	1,153	0.93%	1,498	1.15%	2,651	1.04%	5	200	6	13	96	15	29	221		1	1		
Wayne	484	0.39%	423	0.32%	907	0.36%	1	40	3	5	40	5	10	76					
Webster	184	0.15%	210	0.16%	394	0.15%	2	80	1	2	15	2	4	33					
Wheeler	75	0.06%	28	0.02%	103	0.04%		0	0	1	6	1	1	9					
York	887	0.71%	1,012	0.77%	1,899	0.74%	1	40	5	10	74	11	21	158					

*American Community Survey 2023: ACS 5-Year Estimates

Table 2: Nebraska CPS Inspection Stations

Nebraska - Inspection Stations

County	Population 0-5 (Census*)	% of State Population	Population 5-9 (Census*)	% of State Population	Population 0-9 (Census*)	% of State Population	Inspection Stations	Basic 10 K kids per station	Intermediate 5 K kids per station	Comprehensive 2.5 K kids per station	Basic 10 K kids per station	Intermediate 5 K kids per station	Comprehensive 2.5 K kids per station
State Population	**124,273**		**130,781**		**255,055**		**21**						
Adams	2,006	1.61%	2,009	1.54%	4,015	1.57%	1	0.2	0.4	0.8	0.4	0.8	1.6
Clay	392	0.32%	369	0.28%	761	0.30%		0.0	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.3
Nuckolls	195	0.16%	218	0.17%	413	0.16%	1	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.2
Webster	184	0.15%	210	0.16%	394	0.15%		0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.2
Total	**2,777**	**2.23%**	**2,806**	**2.15%**	**5,583**	**2.19%**	**2**	**0.3**	**0.6**	**1.1**	**0.6**	**1.1**	**2.2**
Banner	44	0.04%	35	0.03%	79	0.03%		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Box Butte	561	0.45%	736	0.56%	1,297	0.51%	1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.5
Cheyenne	547	0.44%	581	0.44%	1,128	0.44%		0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.5
Dawes	446	0.36%	314	0.24%	760	0.30%		0.0	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.3
Deuel	117	0.09%	71	0.05%	188	0.07%		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
Garden	49	0.04%	50	0.04%	99	0.04%		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Grant	50	0.04%	22	0.02%	72	0.03%		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Kimball	133	0.11%	242	0.19%	375	0.15%		0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.2
Morrill	287	0.23%	228	0.17%	515	0.20%		0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2
Scotts Bluff	2,262	1.82%	2,684	2.05%	4,946	1.94%	2	0.2	0.5	0.9	0.5	1.0	2.0
Sheridan	307	0.25%	348	0.27%	655	0.26%		0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.3
Sioux	95	0.08%	73	0.06%	168	0.07%		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
Total	**4,898**	**3.94%**	**5,384**	**4.12%**	**10,282**	**4.03%**	**3**	**0.5**	**1.0**	**2.0**	**1.0**	**2.1**	**4.1**
Banner	44	0.04%	35	0.03%	79	0.03%		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Box Butte	561	0.45%	736	0.56%	1,297	0.51%	1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.5
Cheyenne	547	0.44%	581	0.44%	1,128	0.44%		0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.5
Dawes	446	0.36%	314	0.24%	760	0.30%		0.0	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.3
Deuel	117	0.09%	71	0.05%	188	0.07%		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
Garden	49	0.04%	50	0.04%	99	0.04%		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Grant	50	0.04%	22	0.02%	72	0.03%		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Kimball	133	0.11%	242	0.19%	375	0.15%		0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.2
Morrill	287	0.23%	228	0.17%	515	0.20%		0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2
Scotts Bluff	2,262	1.82%	2,684	2.05%	4,946	1.94%	2	0.2	0.5	0.9	0.5	1.0	2.0
Sheridan	307	0.25%	348	0.27%	655	0.26%		0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.3
Sioux	95	0.08%	73	0.06%	168	0.07%		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
Total	**4,898**	**3.94%**	**5,384**	**4.12%**	**10,282**	**4.03%**	**3**	**0.5**	**1.0**	**2.0**	**1.0**	**2.1**	**4.1**

Nebraska - Inspection Stations

County	Population 0-5 (Census*)	% of State Population	Population 5-9 (Census*)	% of State Population	Population 0-9 (Census*)	% of State Population	Inspection Stations	Basic 10 K kids per station	Intermediate 5 K kids per station	Comprehensive 2.5 K kids per station	Basic 10 K kids per station	Intermediate 5 K kids per station	Comprehensive 2.5 K kids per station
State Population	**124,273**		**130,781**		**255,055**		**21**						
Boyd	68	0.05%	78	0.06%	146	0.06%		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
Holt	657	0.53%	603	0.46%	1,260	0.49%	1	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.5
Rock	79	0.06%	89	0.07%	168	0.07%		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
Brown	173	0.14%	163	0.12%	336	0.13%		0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1
Total	**977**	**0.79%**	**933**	**0.71%**	**1,910**	0.75%	**1**	**0.1**	**0.2**	**0.4**	**0.2**	**0.4**	**0.8**
Boone	314	0.25%	347	0.27%	661	0.26%	1	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.3
Antelope	417	0.34%	494	0.38%	911	0.36%		0.0	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.4
Greeley	136	0.11%	137	0.10%	273	0.11%		0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1
Nance	184	0.15%	216	0.17%	400	0.16%		0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.2
Madison	2,498	2.01%	2,661	2.03%	5,159	2.02%		0.2	0.5	1.0	0.5	1.0	2.1
Platte	2,343	1.89%	2,598	1.99%	4,941	1.94%		0.2	0.5	0.9	0.5	1.0	2.0
Wheeler	75	0.06%	28	0.02%	103	0.04%		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	**5,967**	4.80%	**6,481**	**4.96%**	**12,448**	**4.88%**	**1**	**0.6**	**1.2**	**2.4**	**1.2**	**2.5**	**5.0**
Buffalo	3,039	2.45%	3,186	2.44%	6,225	2.44%	1	0.3	0.6	1.2	0.6	1.2	2.5
Custer	705	0.57%	605	0.46%	1,310	0.51%		0.1	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.5
Dawson	1,876	1.51%	1,910	1.46%	3,786	1.48%		0.2	0.4	0.8	0.4	0.8	1.5
Phelps	576	0.46%	701	0.54%	1,277	0.50%		0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.5
Kearney	411	0.33%	304	0.23%	715	0.28%		0.0	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.3
Sherman	172	0.14%	130	0.10%	302	0.12%		0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1
Total	**6,779**	**5.45%**	**6,836**	**5.23%**	**13,615**	**5.34%**	**1**	0.7	1.4	2.7	1.4	2.7	5.4
Burt	344	0.28%	419	0.32%	763	0.30%		0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.3
Cedar	528	0.42%	655	0.50%	1,183	0.46%		0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.5
Cuming	692	0.56%	637	0.49%	1,329	0.52%	1	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.5
Dixon	347	0.28%	389	0.30%	736	0.29%		0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.3
Dodge	2,377	1.91%	2,478	1.89%	4,855	1.90%	1	0.2	0.5	1.0	0.5	1.0	1.9
Dakota	1,789	1.44%	1,810	1.38%	3,599	1.41%		0.2	0.4	0.7	0.4	0.7	1.4
Antelope	417	0.34%	494	0.38%	911	0.36%		0.0	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.4
Knox	497	0.40%	518	0.40%	1,015	0.40%		0.0	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.4
Madison	2,498	2.01%	2,661	2.03%	5,159	2.02%		0.2	0.5	1.0	0.5	1.0	2.1
Wayne	484	0.39%	423	0.32%	907	0.36%		0.0	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.4
Washington	1,153	0.93%	1,498	1.15%	2,651	1.04%		0.1	0.2	0.5	0.3	0.5	1.1
Stanton	330	0.27%	402	0.31%	732	0.29%		0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.3
Thurston	613	0.49%	635	0.49%	1,248	0.49%	1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.5
Pierce	518	0.42%	542	0.41%	1,060	0.42%		0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.4
Total	**12,587**	**10.13%**	**13,561**	**10.37%**	**26,148**	**10.25%**	**3**	**1.3**	**2.5**	**5.0**	**2.6**	**5.2**	**10.5**

Nebraska - Inspection Stations

County	Population 0-5 (Census*)	% of State Population	Population 5-9 (Census*)	% of State Population	Population 0-9 (Census*)	% of State Population	Inspection Stations	Basic 10 K kids per station	Intermediate 5 K kids per station	Comprehensive 2.5 K kids per station	Basic 10 K kids per station	Intermediate 5 K kids per station	Comprehensive 2.5 K kids per station
State Population	**124,273**		**130,781**		**255,055**		**21**						
Butler	477	0.38%	564	0.43%	1,041	0.41%		0.0	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.4
Fillmore	332	0.27%	272	0.21%	604	0.24%		0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2
Polk	268	0.22%	241	0.18%	509	0.20%		0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2
Seward	968	0.78%	1,082	0.83%	2,050	0.80%		0.1	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.8
York	887	0.71%	1,012	0.77%	1,899	0.74%	1	0.1	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.8
Total	**2,932**	**2.36%**	**3,171**	**2.42%**	**6,103**	**2.39%**	**1**	**0.3**	**0.6**	**1.2**	**0.6**	**1.2**	**2.4**
Cuming	692	0.56%	637	0.49%	1,329	0.52%	1	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.5
Dodge	2,377	1.91%	2,478	1.89%	4,855	1.90%	1	0.2	0.5	1.0	0.5	1.0	1.9
Colfax	848	0.68%	919	0.70%	1,767	0.69%		0.1	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.7
Total	**3,917**	**3.15%**	**4,034**	**3.08%**	**7,951**	**3.12%**	**2**	**0.4**	**0.8**	**1.6**	**0.8**	**1.6**	**3.2**
Dodge	2,377	1.91%	2,478	1.89%	4,855	1.90%	1	0.2	0.5	1.0	0.5	1.0	1.9
Saunders	1,415	1.14%	1,550	1.19%	2,965	1.16%		0.1	0.3	0.6	0.3	0.6	1.2
Washington	1,153	0.93%	1,498	1.15%	2,651	1.04%		0.1	0.2	0.5	0.3	0.5	1.1
Total	**4,945**	**3.98%**	**5,526**	**4.23%**	**10,471**	**4.11%**	**1**	**0.5**	**1.0**	**2.0**	**1.0**	**2.1**	**4.2**
Garfield	86	0.07%	117	0.09%	203	0.08%	1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
Loup	25	0.02%	29	0.02%	54	0.02%		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Wheeler	75	0.06%	28	0.02%	103	0.04%		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Blaine	22	0.02%	24	0.02%	46	0.02%		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Custer	705	0.57%	605	0.46%	1,310	0.51%		0.1	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.5
Greeley	136	0.11%	137	0.10%	273	0.11%		0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1
Howard	442	0.36%	393	0.30%	835	0.33%		0.0	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.3
Sherman	172	0.14%	130	0.10%	302	0.12%		0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1
Valley	235	0.19%	273	0.21%	508	0.20%		0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2
Total	**1,898**	**1.53%**	**1,736**	**1.33%**	**3,634**	**1.42%**	**1**	**0.2**	**0.4**	**0.8**	**0.4**	**0.7**	**1.5**
Johnson	250	0.20%	249	0.19%	499	0.20%		0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.2
Nemaha	400	0.32%	343	0.26%	743	0.29%	1	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.3
Otoe	907	0.73%	1,042	0.80%	1,949	0.76%		0.1	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.8
Pawnee	176	0.14%	143	0.11%	319	0.13%		0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1
Richardson	394	0.32%	464	0.35%	858	0.34%		0.0	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.3
Total	**2,127**	**1.71%**	**2,241**	**1.71%**	**4,368**	**1.71%**	**1**	**0.2**	**0.4**	**0.9**	**0.4**	**0.9**	**1.7**

Nebraska - Inspection Stations

County	Population 0-5 (Census*)	% of State Population	Population 5-9 (Census*)	% of State Population	Population 0-9 (Census*)	% of State Population	Inspection Stations	Basic 10 K kids per station	Intermediate 5 K kids per station	Comprehensive 2.5 K kids per station	Basic 10 K kids per station	Intermediate 5 K kids per station	Comprehensive 2.5 K kids per station
State Population	**124,273**		**130,781**		**255,055**		**21**						
Arthur	34	0.03%	43	0.03%	77	0.03%		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Cass	1,473	1.19%	1,777	1.36%	3,250	1.27%		0.1	0.3	0.6	0.3	0.7	1.3
Chase	228	0.18%	312	0.24%	540	0.21%		0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2
Cherry	320	0.26%	454	0.35%	774	0.30%		0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.3
Douglas	39,122	31.48%	39,113	29.91%	78,235	30.67%	2	3.9	7.8	15.6	7.8	15.6	31.3
Dundy	133	0.11%	119	0.09%	252	0.10%		0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1
Fillmore	332	0.27%	272	0.21%	604	0.24%		0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2
Franklin	158	0.13%	175	0.13%	333	0.13%		0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1
Frontier	139	0.11%	165	0.13%	304	0.12%		0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1
Furnas	264	0.21%	281	0.21%	545	0.21%		0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2
Gage	1,179	0.95%	1,285	0.98%	2,464	0.97%		0.1	0.2	0.5	0.2	0.5	1.0
Gosper	89	0.07%	88	0.07%	177	0.07%		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
Hall	4,705	3.79%	4,357	3.33%	9,062	3.55%	2	0.5	0.9	1.9	0.9	1.8	3.6
Hamilton	581	0.47%	608	0.46%	1,189	0.47%		0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.5
Harlan	175	0.14%	233	0.18%	408	0.16%		0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.2
Hayes	48	0.04%	68	0.05%	116	0.05%		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Hitchcock	160	0.13%	122	0.09%	282	0.11%		0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1
Hooker	25	0.02%	21	0.02%	46	0.02%		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Jefferson	418	0.34%	497	0.38%	915	0.36%		0.0	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.4
Keith	375	0.30%	557	0.43%	932	0.37%		0.0	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.4
Lancaster	18,467	14.86%	19,416	14.85%	37,883	14.85%	1	1.8	3.7	7.4	3.8	7.6	15.2
Lincoln	1,915	1.54%	2,182	1.67%	4,097	1.61%	1	0.2	0.4	0.8	0.4	0.8	1.6
Logan	50	0.04%	61	0.05%	111	0.04%		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
McPherson	13	0.01%	10	0.01%	23	0.01%		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Merrick	440	0.35%	468	0.36%	908	0.36%		0.0	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.4
Nuckolls	195	0.16%	218	0.17%	413	0.16%	1	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.2
Perkins	151	0.12%	257	0.20%	408	0.16%		0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.2
Red Willow	659	0.53%	634	0.48%	1,293	0.51%	1	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.5
Saline	984	0.79%	898	0.69%	1,882	0.74%		0.1	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.8
Sarpy	12,438	10.01%	14,597	11.16%	27,035	10.60%		1.2	2.5	5.0	2.7	5.4	10.8
Scotts Bluff	2,262	1.82%	2,684	2.05%	4,946	1.94%	2	0.2	0.5	0.9	0.5	1.0	2.0
Thayer	264	0.21%	313	0.24%	577	0.23%		0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2
Thomas	19	0.02%	43	0.03%	62	0.02%		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

*American Community Survey 2023: ACS 5-Year Estimates

Nebraska Occupant Protection Assessment
Week Agenda
September 15-19, 2025

Monday - September 15, 2025				
	Start Time	End Time	Total Time	
Interview 1 **Program Management** 1. *Ryley Egger, Highway Safety Administrator, NDOT-HSO* 2. *Greg McVey, Highway Safety Office Supervisor, NDOT-HSO* 3. *Ashley Pick, Traffic Records Coordinator, NDOT-HSO* 4. *Dustin Stewart, Impaired Driving Coordinator, NDOT-HSO* 5. *Paul Letcher, Traffic Safety Specialist, NDOT-HSO* 6. *Chrissy Stege, Accountant, NDOT-HSO* 7. *Eli Albrecht, Highway Safety Program Manager Intern, NDOT-HSO*	9:00 a.m. (central)	10:30 a.m. (central)	90 minutes	20-minute break
Interview 2 **Legislation, Regulation, and Policy** 1. *Amy Borg, Child Passenger Safety Technician, Instructor* 2. *Ryan Balluck, NDOT Legislative Coordinator* 3. *Brian Ortner, Public Affairs Specialist, AAA* 4. *Amanda Ablott, Mary Lanning Child Passenger Safety Technician, Instructor*	10:50 a.m. (central)	12:20 p.m. (central)	90 minutes	N/A
Lunch/Report Writing	12:20 p.m. (central)	1:20 p.m. (central)	60 minutes	N/A
Interview 3 **Data and Evaluation** 1. *Ashley Pick, Traffic Records Coordinator, NDOT-HSO* 2. *Don Butler, Highway Safety Engineer, NDOT* 3. *Savita Sidhu, Epidemiology Surveillance Coordinator, DHHS*	1:20 p.m. (central)	2:50 p.m. (central)	90 minutes	10-minute break

4. Jeanne Bietz, Community Health Educator, DHHS				
SHSO Debrief/Questions from the day	3:00 p.m. (central)	3:20 p.m. (central)	20 minutes	N/A
Assessment Team Debrief	3:20 p.m. (central)	3:50 p.m. (central)	30 minutes	N/A
Independent Writing/ Send Completed Chapters to Administrative Consultant on Wednesday	3:50 p.m. (central)	N/A		
Tuesday – September 16, 2025				
	Start Time	End Time	Total Time	
Interview 4 **Communications** *1. Ryley Egger, Highway Safety Administrator, NDOT-HSO* *2. Nicole Berosek, Panhandle Health District* *3. Tabi Prochazka, Panhandle Health District* *4. Cody Thomas, Public Information Officer, State Patrol* *5. Jeanne Bietz, Community Health Educator, DHHS*	9:00 a.m. (central)	10:30 a.m. (central)	90 minutes	20-minute break
Interview 5 **Outreach – Session 1** *1. Ashley Hake, Health Promotions Manager, Central District Health Department* *2. Simera Reynolds, Community Planner, Four Corners Health Department* *3. Myra Stoney, Health Director, Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department* *4. Jeanne Bietz, Community Health Educator, DHHS* *5. Tabi Prochazka, Panhandle Health District*	10:50 a.m. (central)	12:10 p.m. (central)	70 minutes	N/A
Lunch/Report Writing	12:10 p.m. (central)	1:10 p.m. (central)	60 minutes	N/A
Interview 6 **Enforcement – Session 1**	1:10 p.m. (central)	2:30 p.m. (central)	80 minutes	20-minute break

1. *Sgt. Taylor Samek, York County Sheriff's Office* 2. *Chief Krisa Brass, Scottsbluff Police Department* 3. *Lt. Kaleb Bruggeman, Nebraska State Patrol* 4. *Lt. Dawn Jonas, Crete Police Department* 5. *Major Jeff Wilcynski, Nebraska State Patrol* 6. *Lt. Manuel Jimenez, Nebraska State Patrol* 7. *Bruce Okamoto, Law Enforcement Liaison, NDOT-HSO*				
Interview 7 **Outreach – Session 2** 1. *Nick Sauma, National Safety Council, Nebraska Chapter* 2. *Peggy Reisher, Executive Director, Brain Injury Association of America*	2:50 p.m. (central)	3:30 p.m. (central)	70 minutes	N/A
SHSO Debrief/Questions from the day	3:45 p.m. (central)	4:20 p.m. (central)	20 minutes	N/A
Assessment Team Debrief	4:20 p.m. (central)	4:50 p.m. (central)	30 minutes	N/A
Independent Writing/ Send Completed Chapters to Administrative Consultant on Wednesday	4:50 p.m. (central)	N/A		
Wednesday – September 17, 2025				
	Start Time	End Time	Total Time	
Interview 8 **Child Passenger Safety** 1. *Jason Kerkman, Safe Kids Nebraska, DHHS* 2. *Brian Baker, Safe Kids Lincoln/Lancaster County* 3. *Janel Binder, Safe Kids Lincoln/Lancaster County* 4. *Amanda Ablott, Mary Lanning Child Passenger Safety Technician, Instructor*	9:00 a.m. (central)	10:30 a.m. (central)	90 minutes	20-minute break
Interview 9 **Enforcement – Session 2**	10:50 a.m. (central)	12:00 p.m. (central)	70 minutes	N/A

1. *Sgt. Todd Reeson, Project Night Life, Omaha Police Department* 2. *Sheriff Dustin Weitzel, Dodge County Sheriff's Office*				
SHSO Debrief/Questions from the day	12:00 p.m. (central)	12:20 p.m. (central)	20 minutes	N/A
Assessment Team Debrief	12:20 p.m. (central)	12:50 p.m. (central)	30 minutes	N/A
Lunch/report writing	12:50 p.m. (central)	Until Finish	N/A	N/A

Day 4 – Thursday				
	Start Time	End Time	Total Time	
Assessment Team will review the draft report line-by-line and reach consensus on report and key recommendations	9:00 a.m. (central)	12:00 p.m. (central)	3.0 hours	
Lunch	12:00 p.m. (central)	1:00 p.m. (central)	60 minutes	N/A
Assessment Team will continue to review the draft report line-by-line and reach consensus on report and key recommendations	1:00 p.m. (central)	Until finished		

Day 5 – Friday				
	Start Time	End Time	Total Time	
Assessment Team report out to State, NHTSA, and others invited by State	9:30 a.m. (central)	11:00 a.m. (central)	90 minutes	N/A

ASSESSMENT TEAM CREDENTIALS

TROY COSTALES

Mr. Costales was the state of Oregon's Transportation Safety Division Administrator and Governor's Highway Safety Representative from September of 1997 until May 2021. During his time as the Governor's Representative he worked for three different Governors. Troy has over 40 years of experience in Transportation Safety, including 24 years as the Administrator of the Division.

Mr. Costales was the 2011-2012 Chairman of the Governor's Highway Safety Association (GHSA). He also served on the: American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) – Standing Committee on Highway Safety, AASHTO's Strategic Highway Safety Plan initiative, NHTSA's Impaired Driving program management course writing team, Transportation Research Board's Transportation Safety Management Committee and the Naturalistic Driving Data project, International Association of Chiefs of Police - Drug Evaluation and Classification Program Technical Advisory Panel, plus many others. He was part of the faculty for the GHSA Executive Training Seminar for eighteen years.

Mr. Costales was a member and team lead for several driver education, occupant protection, bicycle/pedestrian, motorcycle safety, and impaired driving program assessments over the past twenty-plus years.

In 2022 Troy was recognized as a DRE Ambassador by the International Association of Chiefs of Police DRE Section, the Kathryn J.R. Swanson Public Service Award from the GHSA, and special recognition by the Oregon ATV Advisory Committee of the Oregon Department of State Parks.

George Fox University
Bachelor of Science in Human Resource Management

Portland State University
Master of Arts in Public Administration

GLENN CRAMER

Glenn Cramer is a traffic safety consultant who has provided law enforcement outreach primarily in the Pacific Northwest. He works closely with state and local law enforcement agencies assisting in the development of effective traffic law enforcement strategies to support highway safety priorities. Glenn was contracted by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Region 10 to provide law enforcement outreach for the Pacific Northwest. Glenn also works with the Transportation Safety Institute (TSI), National Criminal Justice Training Center, and Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health to provide traffic safety instruction to highway safety professionals. He has provided consulting services to 26 states and one territory as a member of assessment teams to review state's traffic safety programs and provide recommendations for improvement.

Glenn retired from the Washington State Patrol (WSP) after 32 years of service. During his career with the WSP he served as the Deputy Chief, commanding the Field Operations Bureau; overseeing 1,200 employees responsible for traffic law enforcement, collision investigation, and ferry and homeland security. Glenn also served as the Assistant Chief commanding the Technical Services Bureau with oversight of the Information Technology Division, Electronic Services Division (Telecommunications), Criminal Records Division, and the Facilities/ Fleet Division.

While serving as the Deputy Chief, he worked closely with researchers at Washington State University to develop procedures to analyze data collected from over two million traffic stops made by WSP troopers to examine whether biased policing practices had occurred. As a captain with the WSP he commanded the Office of Government and Media Relations; representing the Chief of the WSP on legislative matters where he coordinated the development and support of legislation to further the WSP's public safety mission. He was also in charge of developing the WSP's public information programs, where he helped coordinate, plan, and implement the WSP's media and community outreach during the implementation of the traffic stop data collection. One piece of legislation he helped write was Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 43.101.410- *Racial profiling—Policies—Training—Complaint review process—Data collection and reporting.*

Glenn's community involvement has included serving as the president of the board of directors overseeing a nonprofit organization operating with a $1.3 million budget with 44 employees; dedicated to engaging and mobilizing families, schools and the community to advance the health, safety and success of youth in Thurston and Mason Counties (Washington State).

Additionally, he served as a Commissioner of Thurston County (Washington) Civil Service Commission - selected by Thurston County Commissioners to provide oversight of the Thurston County Sheriff's Office's hiring, retention, and promotional process.

TIMOTHY KERNS

Timothy (Tim) Kerns has served as the Director of the Maryland Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Administration's (MDOT/MVA) Highway Safety Office since December 2018. Prior to this, he dedicated 29 years as a research associate and epidemiologist at the University of Maryland's National Study Center for Trauma and EMS (NSC), where he contributed to the development and monitoring of Maryland's Occupant Protection Survey. He also served as the program manager for the NSC's data integration and crash biomechanics programs.

Dr. Kerns is a recognized subject matter expert in various areas of highway safety, including traffic records, occupant protection, impaired driving, and pedestrian/bicycle safety. He currently co-chairs the Governor's Highway Safety Association's Research Committee and is a board member of the Maryland Division of the American Trauma Society. Additionally, he has served as a former board member of the Mid-Atlantic Foundation for Safety and Education and as past President of the Association of Transportation Safety Information Professionals (ATSIP).

Dr. Kerns holds a Ph.D. in Epidemiology from the University of Maryland, Baltimore.

ANGELA OSTERHUBER

Angela Osterhuber has over 35 years of experience in traffic safety providing educational programs and resources for the safe transportation of children. Areas of focus include child safety in family vehicles, school buses and school vehicles, as well as the transportation of children with special health care needs, teen drivers and their passengers, and bicycle and pedestrian safety.

Angela administers the Traffic Injury Prevention Project, a program of the Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. This statewide program is responsible for the development and implementation of child passenger safety (CPS) initiatives to meet community needs. The program provides support for the Pennsylvania CPS technicians and instructors and develops resources for public information and education on traffic safety best practice recommendations. The program provides training and technical assistance to community car seat loan programs, car seat inspection sites, physician practices and hospitals, law enforcement, EMS/fire rescue, and school transportation. An informational website and statewide “800” phone line are maintained as a resource for Pennsylvania residents.

As an advocate for child passenger safety, Angela serves as the designated State CPS Coordinator and is a past member and chair of the National Child Passenger Safety Board. Angela is a certified CPS instructor for the National Child Passenger Safety Technician Certification Training and teaches the “Child Passenger Safety on School Buses National Training”. Angela has also attended the "Safe Travel for All Children" enrichment course to be a resource for children with special needs.

NORRAINE WINGFIELD

Norraine Wingfield is a traffic safety consultant aiding in the areas of traffic safety including occupant protection, child passenger safety, senior drivers, and impaired driving. She is a Bachelor of Science graduate from the University of Kansas and holds both a Child Passenger Safety Instructor license and AARP Smart Driver Instructor. She is a former board member of the National Child Passenger Safety Board and the National AARP Driver Safety Advisory Committee. She retired as Director of the Kansas Traffic Safety Resource Office and the Oklahoma and Missouri SAFE programs managing traffic safety education, marketing, social media and website content and oversite of 1 million plus budget.

Norraine has contracted with the University of Kansas and the Kansas Department of Transportation to manage their Occupant Protection, Impaired Driving and Older Driver Emphasis Area Teams and assisted with the development of the Kansas Strategic Highway Safety Plan. She has worked on grants with the National Academy of Arts and Sciences and has assisted with Kansas and Missouri Hybrid and In Person Child Passenger Safety Technician Classes.

Norraine has been a speaker for various traffic safety topics at Lifesavers, Kids in Motion, , GHSA, Nebraska, Michigan and Missouri Transportation Conferences and has assisted in the development of the following nationally recognized programs: Child Passenger Safety Instructor Development Course, SAFE- Seat belts Are for Everyone, Booster to Belts and Safety Break! She has participated in 14 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Occupant Protection Assessments and has contributed as a panel member for the Transportation Research Board Older Driver RFP/Grant.