



OKLAHOMA

Occupant Protection Program Assessment

June 7-11, 2021

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INTRODUCTION

Oklahoma is the 20th largest state in the nation by area, consisting of 69,899 square miles. Oklahoma is in the South-Central region of the United States and is the 28th most populated state, with the United States Census Bureau estimating the population of Oklahoma to be at 3,956,971 (July 1, 2019), a 5.66 percent increase from 2010. Oklahoma ranks 35th in the nation in terms of population density with 54.7 people per square mile. Oklahoma has 77 counties and the two largest cities are Oklahoma City and Tulsa, whose respective populations are 655,057 and 401,190.



In 2019, there were 36,096 motor vehicle-related fatalities in traffic crashes across the United States. Although the observed daytime seat belt use rate for the United States overall in 2019 was 90.7 percent, almost half of all passenger vehicle occupant fatalities (47 percent) were unrestrained. The lack of proper restraint use therefore remains a serious highway safety, public health, and societal issue. This is true in Oklahoma where in 2019, there were 206 unrestrained passenger fatalities, which accounts for 48 percent of all fatal crashes, exceeding the national average.

The Oklahoma Highway Safety Office (OHSO) is a division within the Oklahoma Department of Public Safety (DPS) and coordinates the statewide behavioral highway safety program making effective use of federal and state highway safety funds and other resources to save lives and reduce injuries on the State's roads. In FY 2019, the OHSO managed nearly 100 projects throughout the State targeting traffic safety efforts for impaired driving, occupant protection, speed, traffic records, distracted driving, youth initiatives, and public awareness.

Occupant protection is the foundation of any 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 Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimates that 234 lives were saved by seat belts in Oklahoma in 2017. An additional 60 lives could have been saved if everyone in the State buckled up.

Per the State seat belt use survey, the seat belt use rate fell from 85.6 percent in 2018 to 84.7 percent in 2019. Oklahoma benefits from having a primary enforcement seat belt law for adults in the front seat of passenger vehicles, which enables law enforcement officers to stop and issue citations if a driver or a front seat passenger is not properly restrained. However, of the 35 states in the country with primary seat belt laws, Oklahoma had the third lowest seat belt use rate in 2019.

This report represents the results of an assessment of the occupant protection component of Oklahoma's highway safety program. The OHSO elected to undergo this assessment to get an

outside perspective and review of the challenges the State is facing to increase seat belt and child restraint use throughout the State, and to receive innovative ideas and approaches from the assessment team of subject matter experts to improve occupant protection use rates. This report provides a summary of the strengths and challenges of Oklahoma's occupant protection program and presents recommendations to continue to improve occupant protection in the State.

The highlighted key recommendations in this report are recommendations the Assessment Team found to be the most crucial for improving the State's occupant protection program. While Oklahoma has multiple initiatives in place to improve its program, there is always room for growth. All recommendations presented in this report are intended to help increase restraint use and decrease unrestrained fatalities and injuries statewide.

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 Oklahoma Highway Safety Office Director, Paul Harris; Program Manager, Samantha Harcrow; Communications Manager, Cody McDonell; and Chief of Plans, Mike Bray for their support, level of effort, and commitment to occupant protection in Oklahoma.

The team would also 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.

This assessment benefitted from the guidance of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration headquarters and regional staff: Laura Dunn and Exzentrius Sturdivant, with support from their respective supervisors, Occupant Protection Chief Marietta Bowen and Regional Administrator Maggi Gunnels and Deputy Regional Administrator Brian Jones.

Special recognition and appreciation also go to Danielle McNeill for her able assistance throughout the assessment process and in producing this report.

Each member of the team appreciates the opportunity to have served on this assessment and hopes that consideration and implementation of the proposed recommendations will enable Oklahoma to continue to improve its occupant protection program.

Notes:

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 U.S. copyright statute.

ASSESSMENT BACKGROUND

This year, due to the pandemic, States have experienced work disruptions such as remote work policies, physical distancing requirements, and State travel constraints. This virtual assessment was conducted via telephone and computer technology between all parties (i.e., Oklahoma personnel, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration headquarters and regional office staff, and six assessment team members) involved, eliminating travel expenses and all in-person interactions.

The purpose of the Occupant Protection (OP) Program Assessment, while virtual, will continue to provide the State of Oklahoma with a review of its OP program through identification of the program's strengths, accomplishments, and challenges, and to make recommendations for improvement. It intends to provide Oklahoma with an extensive review of its statewide OP program through the identification of programmatic strengths and accomplishments, the identification of challenge areas, and recommendations for enhancement or improvement. The assessment is intended to serve as a tool for OP program planning, development, and implementation purposes, and for making decisions about how to best prioritize programs and use available resources.

The technical assessment is intended to:

- Provide an opportunity for open, non-threatening dialogue between Oklahoma's state highway safety office 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 occupant protection (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 Occupant Protection Program Assessment. Working with the Oklahoma Highway Safety Office, NHTSA recommended a team of five individuals with demonstrated subject matter expertise in the areas of Program Management; Legislation, Regulation, and Policy; Law Enforcement; Communications; Occupant Protection for Children; Outreach; and Data and Evaluation. The assessment team conducted the assessment process based on the *Uniform Guidelines for State Highway Safety Programs, Highway Safety Program Guideline No. 20, Occupant Protection* (November 2006). The U.S. Department of Transportation developed the guidelines in collaboration with States to

support technical guidance for the States. The assessment follows 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 OHSO 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 Oklahoma 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 the various stakeholders who presented information to the assessment team.

This assessment report is a consensus report. The assessment team recognizes the commendable and committed work conducted throughout Oklahoma in the area of OP. It is not the intent of this report to thoroughly document all of these 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.

On the final day of the assessment, the team virtually briefed the OHSO on the results of the assessment and discussed major points and recommendations. This report belongs to the OHSO; it is not a NHTSA-owned document. The OHSO may use this assessment report as the basis for planning OP program improvements, assessing legislative priorities, providing additional training, and evaluating funding priorities. The final report is provided to the OHSO and NHTSA.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

- **Establish a statewide Occupant Protection Task Force or Coalition.** 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. The Task Force would be charged with:
 - **Creating an *Occupant Protection Strategic Plan*;**
 - **Helping guide the implementation of the Strategic Highway Safety Plan occupant protection goal;**
 - **Assisting in identifying critical geographic areas of the state and communities that are identified as high-risk;**
 - **Sharing information and resources to reduce duplication of effort;**
 - **Establishing collaborative networks;**
 - **Generating broad-based support for programs and issues; and**
 - **Providing guidance in program planning regarding occupant protection among the various coalitions and committees that are currently in place.**
- **Revise the highway safety grant program process during Fiscal Year 2022 to establish a proactive approach that engages the communities and populations in the State where seat belt use and/or child restraint use is low in Fiscal Year 2023.**

2. LEGISLATION/REGULATION AND POLICY

- **Amend the current seat belt law to cover all passengers in all seating positions.**
- **Increase the basic fine for mandatory seat belt violations and allow increased court costs, making the infraction consistent with other traffic violations.**

3. LAW ENFORCEMENT

- **Develop and implement a traffic safety committee within the Oklahoma Association of Chiefs of Police to:**
 - **Act as an advisory council;**
 - **Develop an action plan to rejuvenate sustained seat belt enforcement;**
 - **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.**
- **Adopt and actively promote the *Toward Zero Deaths* strategy, in conjunction with the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, Governors Highway Safety Association, International Association of Chiefs of Police, 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.

- Explore opportunities, in consultation with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration regional office, for regional pilot projects based on proper problem identification to fund the activity for rural law enforcement agencies to perform seat belt enforcement using regular time.

4. COMMUNICATION

- Establish a minimum paid advertising funding level during the planning and funding allocation process that will allow the State to achieve a reach and frequency level that will help ensure awareness of stepped-up enforcement among key low seat belt use groups.
- Hone *Click it or Ticket* advertising messages to more specifically support awareness of enforcement to enhance the likelihood of increasing observed seat belt use and reducing unrestrained traffic deaths. Continue seat belt social norming messages for times outside of stepped-up enforcement periods.
- Consider conducting the attitude and awareness surveys when the *Click it or Ticket* mobilization ends to provide a more accurate evaluation. Or, conduct a second survey with additional questions at the end of *Click it or Ticket* to better gauge impact of the high-visibility enforcement effort. If cost is a limiting factor, conduct these surveys every two or three years to allow for more robust evaluation tools.

5. OCCUPANT PROTECTION FOR CHILDREN

- Establish a child passenger safety task force to form a cohesive network of traffic safety advocates programming to support and promote child passenger safety efforts statewide under the direction of the Oklahoma Highway Safety Office.
- Create a comprehensive, statewide operational plan to coordinate a variety of child occupant protection program components to better harmonize these efforts.
- Implement a robust child passenger safety law enforcement program that includes standardized training materials and utilize a strategic plan to train all new and current law enforcement officers on basic child passenger safety. This can be used to increase the knowledge base and understanding of the proper use of child restraints that officers can use when performing traffic stops and completing crash reports. The program should support enforcement of existing occupant protection laws.

- **Move to statewide adoption of the National Digital Car Seat Check Form for all technicians to improve statewide data collection and analysis to monitor trends and track use/misuse of car seats, booster seats, and seats belt for children. Allocate funding to purchase electronic data collection devices for State-funded programs.**

6. OUTREACH PROGRAM

- **Establish a statewide occupant protection task force to include:**
 - **Oklahoma Departments of Transportation, Health, Public Safety, and Education**
 - **Statewide chiefs and sheriffs' associations**
 - **State's hospital association,**
 - **State medical association,**
 - **State chamber of commerce,**
 - **Insurance companies,**
 - **Oil and gas industry associations, and**
 - **Diverse and under-served communities.**

This will broaden input and expand potential traffic safety partners. Further, it will move OHSO from a participant role on other committees and groups to one of leadership and guidance for this key traffic safety issue.

- **Develop specific, measurable, achievable, and timely (SMART) objectives for the grant-funded traffic safety educators to increase the likelihood these efforts will lead to improvement in seat belt use and reductions in unrestrained fatalities and injuries.**
- **Build on the successful Energize for Safety Coalition efforts to establish an employer-based traffic safety program focused on increasing seat belt use through the State's oil and gas industry employers.**

7. DATA AND EVALUATION

- **Utilize the teen specific crash data to help recruit additional high schools to participate in the State's teen led peer-to-peer Seat belts Are For Everyone (SAFE) program and enlist new partners.**
- **Increase the opportunities for funding agencies that represent jurisdictions with a low seat belt use rate. Initiate and maintain an active relationship with the law enforcement and traffic safety professionals, advocates, and policy makers in those areas identified through crash and seat belt survey data.**

- **Encourage the remaining 40 percent of manual reporting law enforcement agencies to report crashes electronically.**

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 Oklahoma Department of Public Safety (DPS) Highway Safety Office (OHSO) is the primary office for the leadership, training, and technical assistance for the State of Oklahoma on highway safety programs.
- Occupant protection highway safety programs are funded through grants that are statewide in focus which involve law enforcement, outreach/communications, child passenger safety, and program management. Support for the program comes from a multitude of partners at the State and local community level.
- The *2013-2014 Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP)* was developed, with OHSO actively participating in the process, to maintain and build on the momentum achieved by the State's previous SHSP, which involved outlining both existing and new strategies, as well as the selection of four emphasis areas that have the greatest potential to reduce highway fatalities and suspected serious injuries. Reducing the number of unrestrained motor vehicle fatalities is Goal 5.
- Increasing seat belt and child restraint use continues to be a high priority of the dedicated and passionate safety professionals in OHSO, strategic partners in State agencies, community liaisons, law enforcement, health practitioners, and child passenger safety advocates.

- Seat belt law information is required to be in the educational and on-line resources for teen driver education programs.
- The *2021 Highway Safety Plan* (HSP) emphasizes the importance of increasing seat belt and child restraint use particularly by highlighting the risk of death or injury as a result of ejection from the vehicle when not properly restrained.
- The Oklahoma Highway Patrol provides statewide coverage for enforcement of the occupant protection laws. Local law enforcement agencies also participate in the High Visibility Enforcement mobilizations.
- Media programs and community-level efforts through Safe Kids maintain a year-round presence and join in the mobilization periods with a heightened level of activity.
- There is a significant level of financial investment in the occupant protection program area in the 2021 HSP.
- An Injury Prevention Advisory Committee is in place and increasing the use of occupant protection is one of the areas of emphasis.
- The number of unrestrained traffic fatalities has declined since 2015.
- The Tribal Injury Prevention Regional Coordinator is key to providing communication and resources to tribes specific to car seat and seat belt use.
- OHSO requires all grantees to have a mandatory seat belt use policy in place as a condition of receiving any highway safety grant.
- Crash statics are publicly available, easy to access, and very robust.

1B. CHALLENGES

- An Occupant Protection Task Force or Coalition has not been convened to review, evaluate, and create an *Occupant Protection Strategic Plan* and guide its implementation.
- Current projects are independently productive but lack a higher level of coordination and direction under a strategic plan for occupant protection. There does not appear to be a singular voice that leads the overall occupant protection program from a statewide strategic level to provide centralized program planning, implementation, and coordination to achieve and sustain high rates of seat belt use. Transitioning from a project management model to an overall program management model is best supported by a

statewide Occupant Protection Task Force or Coalition as a means to stay engaged in the myriad of activities that are underway.

- OHSO manages a high volume of funding for grants in the occupant protection program area. The data analysis shows areas and populations of the State where seat belt use is low, yet there is no comprehensive and focused effort for grants that is proactively targeted to those communities of interest.
- Due to COVID-19, there is an unusually high amount of carry-forward grant funds that will need to be programmed as part of the FY 2022 HSP planning process.
- There are upcoming changes to the site locations for the statewide seat belt observational survey. This will require evaluating the new selected sites and also will change some of the longitudinal data streams as some locations will drop off and new sites will be added.
- Media campaigns can be tracked to identify which areas of the State have received or were exposed to occupant protection messaging. The seat belt observational survey and unrestrained occupant crash data indicates areas of the State that are considered high risk. No analysis has been done to evaluate if the media campaigns are reaching the populations in the high-risk areas.

1C. RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Establish a statewide Occupant Protection Task Force or Coalition. 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. The Task Force would be charged with:**
 - **Creating an *Occupant Protection Strategic Plan*;**
 - **Helping guide the implementation of the Strategic Highway Safety Plan occupant protection goal;**
 - **Assisting in identifying critical geographic areas of the state and communities that are identified as high-risk;**
 - **Sharing information and resources to reduce duplication of effort;**
 - **Establishing collaborative networks;**
 - **Generating broad-based support for programs and issues; and**
 - **Providing guidance in program planning regarding occupant protection among the various coalitions and committees that are currently in place.**
- Establish a responsibility and expectation for the strategic oversight role in the occupant protection program.

- **Revise the highway safety grant program process during Fiscal Year 2022 to establish a proactive approach that engages the communities and populations in the State where seat belt use and/or child restraint use is low in Fiscal Year 2023.**
- Evaluate the media campaigns to confirm that messages are reaching the populations in the high-risk areas of the State.

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

- Oklahoma's primary seat belt law applies to every operator and front seat passenger of a Class A commercial motor vehicle, Class B commercial motor vehicle, Class C commercial motor vehicle or a passenger vehicle operated in the State.
- The seat belt shall be worn properly adjusted and fastened.
- A conviction of the seat belt law is noted on the driver license record.

- Oklahoma's child passenger protection laws allow for primary enforcement and cover children up to the age of eight. The law calls out the specific types of child restraints that are to be used based on the age and weight of the child.
- The child passenger restraint system law outlines that child restraint systems and booster seats shall be used as designated by the manufacturer.
- Violations of the seat belt or child passenger restraint system law are admissible as evidence in any civil action or proceeding for damages.
- The Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) laws include three stages of licensure. The laws place restrictions and sanctions on high-risk driving situations for novice drivers (i.e., nighttime driving restrictions, passenger restrictions, adult supervision, and seat belt use).
- When using a State vehicle or a personal vehicle for State business, employees are required to use seat belts.
- The OHSO grants include a requirement for a mandatory seat belt use policy for all grantees.
- Local highway safety coalitions, statewide non-profits, and many other organizations are in support of raising the fine amount for the seat belt law.
- A portion of the fees collected from convictions of the child passenger restraint system law are used to provide funding for tuition scholarships and child passenger safety continuing education for instructors and technicians.

2B. CHALLENGES

- Oklahoma's seat belt law does not cover children over the age of 8 and under the age of 17 when riding in the back seat of a motor vehicle.
- Adult back seat passengers are not covered by any seat belt law.
- The fine for violating the seat belt law is \$20 and that amount includes court costs.
- A conviction of a seat belt law violation does not accrue points on the driver license record of the violator.

- It is not known if the citizens of the State support a higher fine, requiring the use of a seat belt by older children and teens when in the back seat, and carrying passengers in the open bed of a pickup truck.

2C. RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Amend the current seat belt law to cover all passengers in all seating positions.**
- **Increase the basic fine for mandatory seat belt violations and allow increased court costs, making the infraction consistent with other traffic violations.**
- Implement a graduated fine schedule for subsequent seat belt or child passenger protection offenses.
- Accrue points on the driver license record for conviction of the seat belt law.

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 Oklahoma Highway Safety Office (OHSO) has an excellent working relationship with Oklahoma law enforcement agencies.
- The Oklahoma Highway Patrol (OHP) has a comprehensive statewide traffic law enforcement program with a demonstrated commitment to public information. OHP troopers comprise 12 percent of all sworn law enforcement officers in Oklahoma and perform the majority of all occupant protection enforcement for the State.
- The OHSO has the resource of a well-respected OHP lieutenant who acts as the Impaired

Driving Liaison (IDL) responsible for coordinating and promoting participation in statewide traffic law enforcement initiatives and other OHSO efforts including seat belt enforcement mobilizations.

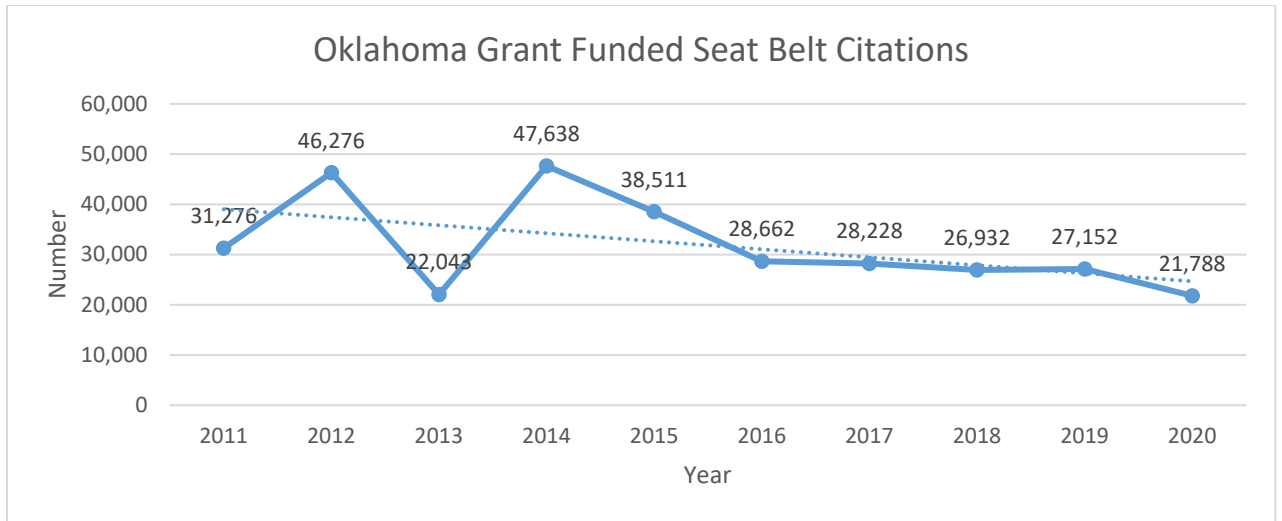
- Oklahoma law enforcement agencies performing activity under OHSO grants understand and implement the elements of the High Visibility Enforcement (HVE) program.
- OHSO helps support Safe Kids Tulsa's law enforcement recognition program (Buckle Down Awards) to highlight individual officer's outstanding seat belt enforcement efforts. A recent study regarding the effectiveness of High Visibility Enforcement (HVE) noted the importance of recognizing high-performers for participation and traffic safety outcomes.
- OHSO maintains a traffic law enforcement activity progress tracking system for grant-funded activity to include seat belt mobilizations. These progress reports are used to review the activity and follow up with law enforcement agencies as needed.
- OHSO requires law enforcement agencies to have a seat belt use policy to receive grant funding.
- Standardized crash reports collect the use or non-use of seat belts and child restraints.

3B. CHALLENGES

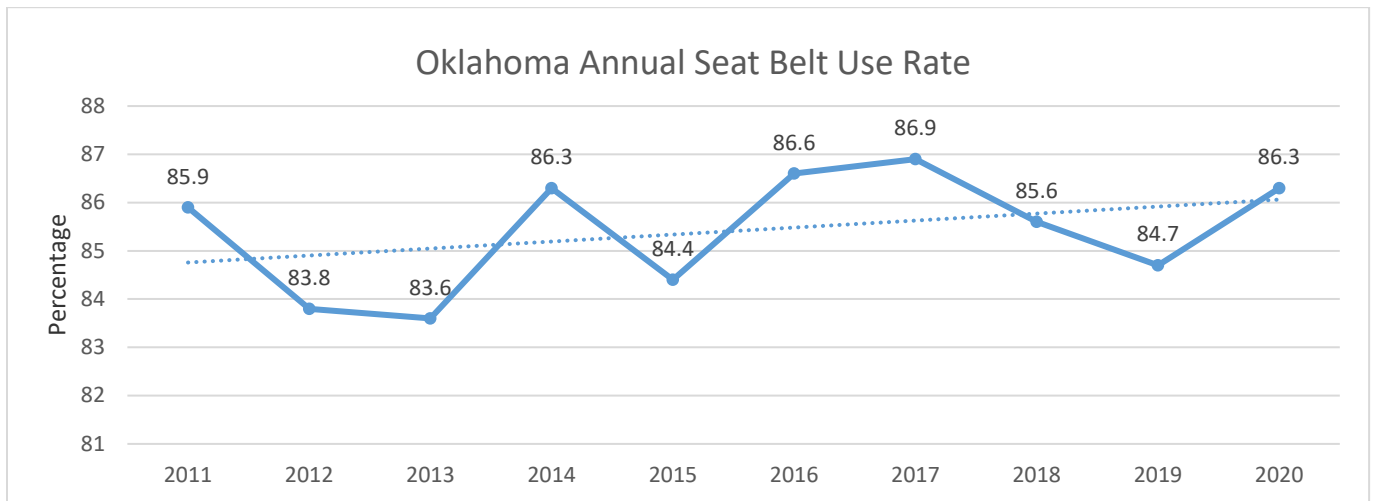
- There does not appear to be a unifying State traffic safety vision, such as the national Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) program, as adopted by several States. *Toward Zero Deaths: A National Strategy on Highway Safety* provides a platform of consistency for State agencies, private industry, national organizations, and others to prioritize traffic safety culture and promote the national TZD vision.
- There was no indication the Oklahoma Association of Chiefs of Police (OACP) or the Oklahoma Sheriff's Association (OSA) has endorsed strict seat belt enforcement.
- The OACP does not have a traffic safety committee as part of their organization to provide recommendations to its members for the improvement of police traffic management and the promotion of traffic safety. The OSA does have a traffic safety committee however, there is limited involvement with the OHSO. The traffic safety committee should serve as an advisory council and forum for traffic safety discussion.
- It was unclear the level of support Oklahoma law enforcement executives provide in prioritizing occupant protection enforcement. Studies have found that the value 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.

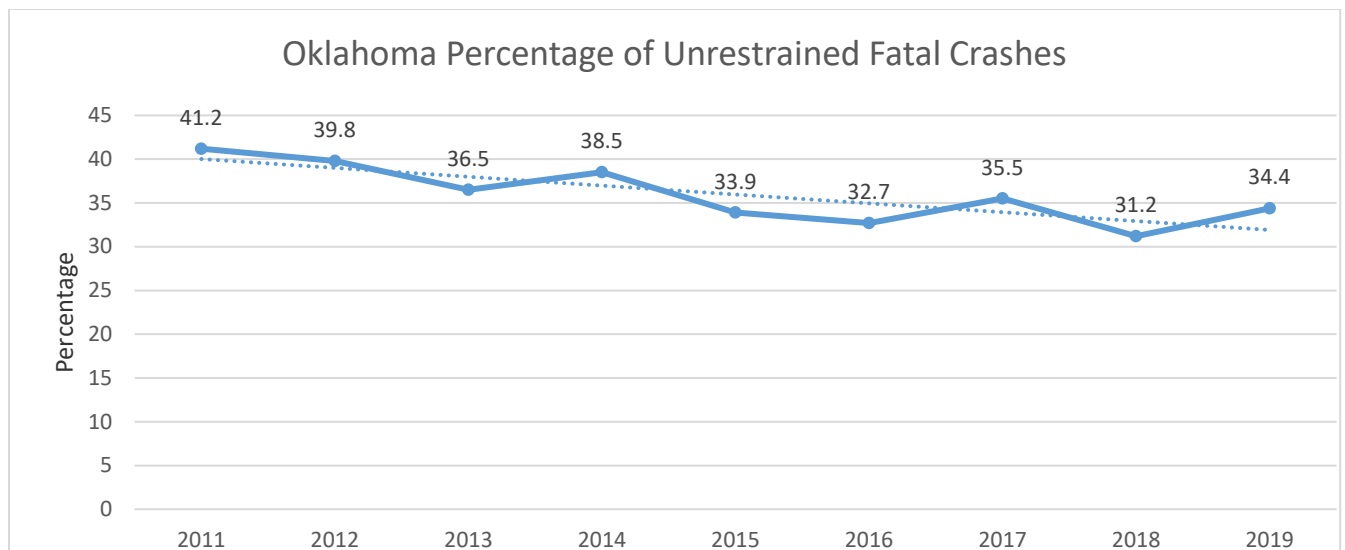
- There is a perception that seat belt enforcement is not a public safety priority because the seat belt law does not require seat belt use for all seating positions, does not assess points to the driver license record, and has a low fine structure (\$20). Studies have shown higher fines are associated with higher safety belt use and fines between \$60 and \$100 are likely most effective.
- A common theme communicated during the assessment reported the \$20 fine for a seat belt violation is not a deterrent to change behavior, however there has been no data analysis to support this assertion.
- There is not a clear understanding of the Oklahoma specific cost of crashes with the injury burden for non-use of seat belts for the State. This information would be beneficial to share with law enforcement agencies to support the legitimacy for seat belt enforcement and the importance for law enforcement leadership to prioritize this activity.
- There is no centralized citation and adjudication repository to collect seat belt and child passenger data from law enforcement agencies. This type of data is essential to assist law enforcement agencies in the development and refining of traffic safety intervention strategies and traffic law enforcement tactics. These are essential elements of an evidence-based enforcement strategy. Additionally, the lack of these data makes it difficult for OHSO to evaluate the effectiveness of grant-funded traffic law enforcement programs or to compare to non-grant funded activities. The State has identified a resource and is presently working on the development of a centralized citation repository.
- With the lack of a centralized citation repository it is difficult to assess intensity for an overall seat belt enforcement strategy. Law enforcement seat belt mobilizations appear to be in a maintenance mode. The grant-funded seat belt enforcement has been decreasing annually and with the analysis of unrestrained crash data and the seat belt use rate remaining static this would suggest a lack of intensity potentially leading to less effective enforcement.



Source: Oklahoma Highway Safety Office 2011-2020 Annual Reports



Source: Oklahoma Highway Safety Office 2011-2020 Annual Reports



Source: Oklahoma Highway Safety Office 2011-2020 Annual Reports

- In 2018, OHSO contracted with the Kimberling Consulting Inc. to collect information about the attitudes and awareness of adults living in Oklahoma regarding their driving habits. In this survey the following question was asked – “What do you think the chances are of getting a ticket if you don’t wear your safety belt? That is, how frequently do you think someone who doesn’t wear his or her safety belt in Oklahoma gets a ticket?” In response to the question; 15.5 percent of the respondents indicated “Always” and 22.4 percent indicated “Nearly Always.” These results indicate there may be little general deterrence for seat belt compliance. Traffic law systems must rely upon general deterrence for compliance.
- The common non-seat belt user profile used for problem identification and media messaging is basic. There is a need for information on Oklahoma specific non-seat belt user characteristics to assist law enforcement agencies to identify dangerous drivers (e.g., the type of behavior, criminality, crash risk, and non-compliant personalities of non-seat belt users) and to develop intervention plans and implement appropriate countermeasures.

3C. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop and implement a centralized citation and adjudication data repository with the governance and authority for one entity to be the State’s custodian.
- **Develop and implement a traffic safety committee within the Oklahoma Association of Chiefs of Police to:**
 - **Act as an advisory council;**
 - **Develop an action plan to rejuvenate sustained seat belt enforcement;**

- **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.**
- Work with the Oklahoma Sheriffs Association's Traffic Safety Committee representing 77 Sheriff's Offices to support effective law enforcement coverage of traffic safety.
- Identify champions within the Oklahoma Association of Chiefs of Police and Oklahoma Sheriffs Association for the organizations to endorse a strict seat belt enforcement resolution.
- Develop a law enforcement liaison seat belt enforcement progress report to be shared with key stakeholders on a quarterly basis to identify performance gaps and necessary actions to support the occupant protection performance measurements in the *Oklahoma Highway Safety Plan*.
- **Adopt and actively promote the *Toward Zero Deaths* strategy, in conjunction with the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, Governors Highway Safety Association, International Association of Chiefs of Police, 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.**
- **Explore opportunities, in consultation with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration regional office, for regional pilot projects based on proper problem identification to fund the activity for rural law enforcement agencies to perform seat belt enforcement using regular time.**
- Develop and share an in-depth profile of the personality (behavioral risk assessment) of seat belt violators with criminal justice professionals, traffic safety professionals, advocates, media, and policy makers. This behavioral risk assessment is helpful for an intelligence-led development of traffic law enforcement intervention strategies to assess the effectiveness of the enforcement and refine future enforcement tactics.
- Develop and implement a proactive traffic safety outreach program using community-oriented policing strategies for the Hispanic community, with the goal of reducing the number of Hispanic drivers and victims involved in unrestrained collisions. (As a reference Washington and California have implemented Hispanic outreach programs entitled El Protector).

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 Oklahoma Highway Safety Office (OHSO) has a full-time communications manager who handles media inquiries and is the primary media contact and planner for enforcement and education mobilizations. The communications manager also is responsible for the OHSO website and social media platforms and maintains the library of print publications.

- Oklahoma participates in the national seat belt mobilization in May that aligns with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) recommendations to use the *Click it or Ticket* campaign theme, utilize paid advertising to support widespread awareness of stepped-up enforcement, and seat belt use observational surveys.
- The State's paid advertising strategic plan for *Click it or Ticket* identifies the following target audience characteristics:
 - men 18-54
 - likely to own a pickup truck
 - live in rural areas
- A State-contracted creative services agency provides professional services to develop annual *Click it or Ticket* advertising campaign strategies. Advertising incorporates both NHTSA-produced campaign assets as well as messages designed specifically for Oklahoma audiences.
- The paid advertising plan includes a unique seat belt quiz component that allows the State to engage with motorists in a new and interactive way.
- Social norming messages are part of an overall strategy to increase seat belt use.
- The OHSO issues a news release when the *Click it or Ticket* mobilization starts that includes media availabilities for reporters to speak with the highway safety office or law enforcement officers.
- An annual attitude and awareness survey allows the State to measure changes in self-reported seat belt use, perception of receiving a seat belt ticket, and awareness of seat belt messages over time.
- Child passenger safety partners are asked to support and promote Child Passenger Safety Week events and messages while the OHSO provides modest funds to promote messages through social media channels.
- The OHSO utilizes social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube to share occupant protection and other traffic safety information.
- The OHSO communications manager has developed relationships with the Oklahoma Department of Transportation, Oklahoma Turnpike Authority, Oklahoma Department of Public Safety, Oklahoma Highway Patrol, and the Oklahoma Health Department that engage State agency partners to help support seat belt and child passenger safety messaging efforts through such means as electronic message boards on freeways, video

monitors in licensing facilities, and information on State government agency social media platforms.

- The OHSO has traffic safety publications, available at no charge, that are found on the agency's website. Child passenger safety information is also offered in a Spanish-language version that was recently updated through a partnership with the Oklahoma Health Department.
- Annual seat belt observational survey results are accessible through the OHSO website; grantees and other partners are directed there and encouraged to use the information for planning and problem identification processes.

4B. CHALLENGES

- A key component of a successful high visibility enforcement program, paid advertising, risks being underfunded in the current planning process that prioritizes funding law enforcement grant requests when allocating occupant protection funding.
- The paid advertising target audience may be overly broad and strain the ability of the limited budget to adequately meet the reach and frequency levels that will help ensure awareness of stepped-up enforcement among key low seat belt use groups.
- The contracted advertising agency has been tasked with identifying the paid advertising target group(s) rather than utilizing the OHSO in-house knowledge and expertise.
- Paid advertising messaging largely focuses on proper restraint use/buckling up in general rather than focusing on awareness of stepped-up enforcement.
- The seat belt quiz is an innovative engagement tactic that could provide stronger support for the mobilization by focusing more on enforcement awareness.
- The State conducts a single, multi-area attitude and awareness survey annually in May that includes questions that are similar to the national public awareness survey recommendations. Both the survey timing and limited questions fails to adequately measure the impact of the statewide *Click it or Ticket* campaign on increasing motorists' perception of getting a ticket and hearing messages since it takes place before these efforts start.

- The State's observational seat belt survey includes basic information and does not provide insights into age or race/ethnicity that would further assist with identifying groups for messaging.
- While Oklahoma has a robust child passenger safety program and informational materials, there is no specific effort focusing on caregivers to increase booster seat use.

4C. RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Establish a minimum paid advertising funding level during the planning and funding allocation process that will allow the State to achieve a reach and frequency level that will help ensure awareness of stepped-up enforcement among key low seat belt use groups.**
- Focus on the high-risk problem audience through problem identification to maximize the impact of paid advertising funds as well as messages developed specifically for this age group.
- **Hone *Click it or Ticket* advertising messages to more specifically support awareness of enforcement to enhance the likelihood of increasing observed seat belt use and reducing unrestrained traffic deaths. Continue seat belt social norming messages for times outside of stepped-up enforcement periods.**
- Utilize traffic safety program and traffic records in-house expertise to analyze data sources to determine *Click it or Ticket* target groups.
- Modify questions for the online quiz to more directly support awareness of stepped-up enforcement by asking things like: *What is the fine for a seat belt ticket in Oklahoma? How many people were cited each year for failing to buckle up in Oklahoma? Seat belts reduce your risk of death by what percentage?*
- Ensure the questions regarding seat belts in the attitude and awareness survey align with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and Governors Highway Safety Association recommendations and consider expanding questions to better gauge awareness of the *Click it or Ticket* campaign as well as enforcement. Utilize the questions already provided in the national guidance: *In the past 30 days, have you read, seen or heard anything about seat belt enforcement by police? What do you think the chances of getting a ticket if you don't wear your seat belt?*
- Use attitudinal survey questions that solicit the response from the person being surveyed. Avoid questions which allow the respondent to answer on behalf of others, in order to garner survey results about personal opinions.
- **Consider conducting the attitude and awareness surveys when the *Click it or Ticket* mobilization ends to provide a more accurate evaluation. Or, conduct a second survey with additional questions at the end of *Click it or Ticket* to better gauge impact of the high-visibility enforcement effort. If cost is a limiting factor, conduct these surveys every two or three years to allow for more robust evaluation tools.**

- Expand the information collected during the State's observational seat belt survey to include gender, age, and race/ethnicity that will allow for more precise problem identification and in turn more effective countermeasures.
- Develop and implement a booster seat campaign for caregivers that is coordinated through the Oklahoma Highway Safety Office but leverages the State's child passenger safety network to help build awareness. Utilize materials available through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

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

- The Oklahoma Highway Safety Office (OHSO) implements an annual grant process to support child passenger safety (CPS) programming throughout the State.

- Oklahoma has a primary child passenger restraint system law for children birth to age eight.
 - Children under two years must ride rear facing.
 - Children two to four years must be in a car seat.
 - 4-8 years: Must be in a car seat or child booster seat until at least age 8 unless the child is taller than 4'9".

Additionally, the law contains a Good Samaritan clause to protect child passenger safety technicians acting in good faith from civil damages.

- The OHSO receives revenue from the Department of Public Safety Restricted Revolving Fund to promote the use of child passenger restraint systems.

- Oklahoma currently has 672 certified CPS technicians, 30 instructors and 16 proxies. Oklahoma reported a recertification rate of 55.7 percent in 2019 which remains consistent with the national average of 55.5 percent.

Certification by Profession

- Fire: 236
- Law Enforcement: 29
- EMS: 9
- Health Department: 75
- Tribal: 93
- Medical: 81

- OHSO reports 139 inspection stations throughout the State forming an active network of car seat inspection stations. Thirty-seven of these inspection stations are identified as serving the Native American population. Ten inspection stations are located at police departments.
- Technician certification courses are offered, on average, 15 times per year to counter the attrition rate of the technician pool.
- There are statewide coordinated efforts to provide annual in-person technical updates for CPS technicians to maintain certification.
- CPS messaging, event promotion, and outreach are shared on social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. CPS related information is also available on partner websites and respective social media platforms providing local level information about inspection stations and resources.
- There is a strong network of Safe Kids coalitions which includes Safe Kids Oklahoma, Safe Kids OKC Metro, Safe Kids Na-I-Sha, and Safe Kids Tulsa. Safe Kids Tulsa and Safe Kids Oklahoma were awarded a combined \$447,917 for FY2021 to coordinate CPS programming throughout the State. Funding received is used to support CPS programming, training, resources, activities, and support services throughout Oklahoma. Outreach is provided to:

- Families and caregivers;
 - Minority groups;
 - Underserved communities;
 - CPS technicians and instructors;
 - Law enforcement; and,
 - Local agencies and injury prevention programs.
- Oklahoma State Department of Health receives funding from the Centers for Disease Control to coordinate a variety of child passenger safety initiatives within county health departments throughout the State.
 - There is a network of local programs throughout the State not funded by OHSO that provide direct services in diverse and underserved communities. These services include:
 - Spanish traffic safety materials;
 - Child passenger safety education;
 - Car seat distribution; and,
 - Access to translators.

5B. CHALLENGES

- The current child restraint system law has components that deviate from current best practice use of car seats, booster seats and seat belts and does not adequately protect all child passengers. This can make enforcement a challenge during roadside stops and can be confusing to parents.
- Oklahoma is home to 38 Native American tribes with the second-highest number (526,408) and percentage (13.19 percent) of Native Americans among all States in the country yet none of these tribes receive State funding to support child passenger safety programming.
- Law enforcement is underrepresented in the total number of certified child passenger safety technicians accounting for four percent of the total number.
- Except for law enforcement officers that complete the national child passenger safety technician certification training, there are inconsistencies in the child passenger safety training provided to law enforcement officers. A lack of standardized training and resources does not adequately equip law enforcement officers with the tools necessary to identify children who are properly secured as outlined by Oklahoma law.

- There does not appear to be a strong statewide effort to enforce the child passenger restraint system law. It has been reported that most law enforcement officers are more inclined to issue a warning for a child restraint violation.
- There are no statewide coordinated efforts to provide booster seat education to caregivers or children ages eight to 12. Additionally, there are no statewide efforts to provide CPS training to childcare and foster care providers, or grandparents.
- Oklahoma does not have a statewide car seat inspection data collection process to record car seat check data collected at inspection stations throughout the State. This data is critical to support program justification and only OHSO-funded programs are required to report car seat check data to the State.
- The OHSO does not have a uniform process for tracking and monitoring child passenger safety activities statewide beyond State-funded programs. This makes it difficult to ensure programming needs are being met.
- Many CPS programs have taken the onus in creating their own training materials and resources to provide training and support for caregivers and local agencies in their respective areas. This is time consuming and leads to a disconnect of services offered throughout the State.
- According to the 2019 *Oklahoma Statewide Child Restraint Survey*, children in the front seat were much less likely (78.2 percent) than children in the back seat (91.6 percent) to be restrained. Additionally, children riding in vehicles when the driver was using a seat belt (95.3 percent restrained) than when the driver was not belted (55.2 percent restrained) ~ a 40.1 percentage point difference. These numbers have remained stagnant from previous surveys conducted.

5C. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Enhance Oklahoma's child restraint law by implementing the following components:
 - Include a provision requiring children between the ages of eight and 17 to use a seat belt in the back seat of a motor vehicle.
 - Create a provision for escalating penalties for subsequent violations of the child restraint law.
 - Modify the component of the law that limits fines with proof of purchase or acquisition of a child passenger restraint system by developing and implementing a child restraint diversion program that provides offenders with the opportunity to receive education and assistance in acquisition and installation of a child restraint through State funded inspection stations.

- Add a provision prohibiting passengers from riding in the cargo area of a pick-up truck.
- Review data collected through observational surveys to monitor trends and patterns of use and misuse of child restraints and create targeted messaging strategies to support booster seat and seat belt use for older children with an emphasis on riding restrained in the back seat.
- Create a comprehensive plan to expand child passenger safety partnerships to tribal communities in all regions of the State. Encourage Oklahoma Highway Safety Office grantees to provide ongoing outreach to tribes.
- Partner with the Indian Highway Safety Office in consultation with National Highway Traffic Safety Administration regional office to encourage Oklahoma tribes to apply for highway safety funding to support child passenger safety initiatives.
- **Establish a child passenger safety task force to form a cohesive network of traffic safety advocates programming to support and promote child passenger safety efforts statewide under the direction of the Oklahoma Highway Safety Office's Child Passenger Safety manager**
- **Create a comprehensive, statewide operational plan to coordinate a variety of child occupant protection program components to better harmonize these efforts.**
- Encourage agencies throughout the State to utilize existing State and national resources to streamline and enhance programming efforts and support the uniformity of messaging.
- Develop and implement a strategic plan to enhance statewide child passenger safety programming efforts by targeting:
 - Childcare providers;
 - Foster care providers;
 - Grandparents; and,
 - Caregivers.
- Create and grow a comprehensive statewide school-based traffic safety program for children kindergarten through 8th grade and offer grant opportunities to support school-based programs.
- Identify and assist champions within diverse communities to receive child passenger safety certification and partner with them to create a network of direct services in diverse and underserved communities. Develop culturally appropriate community-based programming and educational materials. These services include:
 - Multilingual traffic safety materials;

- Support services and training on Military bases;
 - Car seat distribution; and
 - Access to translators and sign language services for those who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- **Implement a robust child passenger safety law enforcement program that includes standardized training materials and utilize a strategic plan to train all new and current law enforcement officers on basic child passenger safety. This can be used to increase the knowledge base and understanding of the proper use of child restraints that officers can use when performing traffic stops and completing crash reports. The program should support enforcement of existing occupant protection laws.**
- Increase the number of law enforcement officers certified in child passenger safety and encourage participation at checkup events and conferences to counter the attrition rate.
- Update and enhance the state-funded child passenger safety partner websites to provide a dynamic, interactive experience for caregivers with state-produced messaging and branding. Incorporate links to current State and local resources. Encourage the use of these materials by parents, grantees, partners, and stakeholders.
- **Move to statewide adoption of the National Digital Car Seat Check Form for all technicians to improve statewide data collection and analysis to monitor trends and track use/misuse of car seats, booster seats, and seats belt for children. Allocate funding to purchase electronic data collection devices for State-funded programs.**

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; and*
- *Work with School Resource Officers (SROs) to promote seat belt use among high school students;*
- *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

- The Oklahoma Highway Safety Office (OHSO) works with a wide range of partners, including but not limited to oil and gas industry employers, faith-based organizations, Native American tribes, youth-based Family, Career and Community Leaders of America, Safe Kids coalitions, and the agricultural community.
- The State has two strong Safe Community groups that engage community partners to address traffic safety issues that include seat belt use and child passenger safety (CPS). The Safe Kids Tulsa program has been active with outreach to the local Hispanic community to promote proper child restraint use.
- The State Department of Health actively encourages its network of local health departments to have CPS technicians available to provide education and training on correctly using child safety seats. Most but not all of the 68 local health departments provide CPS training for their community.
- The OHSO supports two grant-funded law enforcement officers who serve as traffic safety educators who make traffic safety presentations to groups such as schools, churches, businesses, and non-profits throughout the State. Most presentations, nearly 60 percent, are occupant protection focused.
- Oklahoma tribes appear to be actively engaged in promoting seat belt use and providing CPS information and training to their communities. They cite strong relationships with the OHSO.
- CPS materials are available in Spanish and many *Click it or Ticket* news releases are picked up by Spanish-language media outlets. One of two statewide traffic safety educators speaks Spanish and makes safety presentations to Hispanic groups on seat belt

and CPS topics. The OHSO has also produced traffic safety information for the State's Indian tribes.

- The OHSO provides grant funding to support a high school, peer-to-peer *Seat Belts Are For Everyone* (SAFE) program. A full-time project director recruits high schools to participate in the program that incorporates seat belt observation surveys as well as monthly safety activities to encourage more students to buckle up.
- An Energize for Safety Coalition was established to address an increase in crashes involving passenger vehicles and oil field trucks along certain corridors. Working with private industry partners from oil and gas companies and State agencies, a multi-faceted solution was developed that included engineering, enforcement, and education. Education incorporated seat belt messages.

6B. CHALLENGES

- Although the State has many statewide and local groups that address traffic safety issues, there is no single coalition or committee focused solely on increasing seat belt use and correctly using child restraints. This limits partners' ability to have input into the planning and program development process as well as build broad support for and involvement with occupant protection programs.
- Utilizing grantees who work with law enforcement, or who provide CPS training and car seat education, or who serve as traffic safety educators, the OHSO may be inadvertently limiting direct relationships with traffic safety partners other than State agencies and grant-funded programs.
- The State lacks a strategic, data-driven, and coordinated plan to reach out and engage the Hispanic population as part of efforts to increase seat belt and child restraint use. While there are many programs and activities taking place, there is no overarching plan or shared communication to ensure efforts are comprehensive and reduce the likelihood of redundancies.
- The grant-funded traffic safety educators appear to lack evidence-based direction and objectives for their activities such as:
 - focusing on high fatality and injury areas
 - identifying clear education or behavior change outcomes for presentations
 - incorporating pre- and post-surveys to measure changes in awareness
 - tracking the number of people reached with seat belt and/or CPS presentations
- While Oklahoma has a strong network that includes hospital-based CPS technician training and recertification opportunities, no information was presented that demonstrates

the State is engaging medical professionals to assist with occupant protection and CPS messaging and programs to increase belt use through doctor/patient interactions.

- The SAFE program works with about 20 of the State's 500+ high schools. This is about four percent of all eligible schools.
- The Energize for Safety Coalition efforts have been limited to crashes along specific corridors with an unrecognized potential to expand this successful program to all oil and gas employees as the basis for a model employer-based traffic safety program.
- The State appears to have no formal, coordinated, evidenced-based occupant protection curriculum for students. Although a variety of programs and presentations reach students from elementary to high school, the State lacks a coordinated State-sponsored traffic safety health curriculum.
- There was limited evidence the State has employer-based traffic safety programs or State-level business partnerships to promote campaigns like *Click it or Ticket* or general seat belt use that would aid in year-round messaging and efforts to reach low belt-use and diverse populations.

6C. RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Establish a statewide occupant protection task force to include:**
 - **Oklahoma Departments of Transportation, Health, Public Safety, and Education**
 - **Statewide chiefs and sheriffs' associations**
 - **State's hospital association,**
 - **State medical association,**
 - **State chamber of commerce,**
 - **Insurance companies,**
 - **Oil and gas industry associations, and**
 - **Diverse and under-served communities.**

This will broaden input and expand potential traffic safety partners. Further, it will move OHSO from a participant role on other committees and groups to one of leadership and guidance for this key traffic safety issue.

- Bring together a special work group to develop a robust Hispanic occupant protection and CPS program for the State, starting with data evaluation and problem identification to guide the planning process. This will ensure activities are coordinated, tracked, and meet the community's unique needs.

- **Develop specific, measurable, achievable, and timely (SMART) objectives for the grant-funded traffic safety educators to increase the likelihood these efforts will lead to improvement in seat belt use and reductions in unrestrained fatalities and injuries.**
- Leverage any existing relationships with hospitals and medical providers to implement new initiatives to provide technical assistance and education about the importance of occupant protection to primary caregivers who in turn can share this with patients. Encourage questions about seat belt use to be incorporated into health risk appraisals. Invite family physician groups to join the newly formed Occupant Protection Task Force.
- Review the Seatbelts Are For Everyone (SAFE) program and determine if recruiting efforts might be more successful with a narrower geographic focus or other program tweaks. Also, seek additional partnerships like the high school athletic association that may help increase school participation.
- Approach the Oklahoma Department of Education to include seat belt safety in the State's school health curriculum to ensure age-appropriate modules for booster seats and seat belts are included from elementary through high school. Encourage the department's participation on the new Occupant Protection Task Force.
- **Build on the successful Energize for Safety Coalition efforts to establish an employer-based traffic safety program focused on increasing seat belt use through the State's oil and gas industry employers.**

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

- Oklahoma conducts and publicizes an annual observational seat belt survey which follows to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) guidelines. The survey includes all drivers and front seat outboard passengers and collects information on the urban/rural differences, regions and vehicle types. The 2019 survey estimates the combined (driver and front right seat passenger) statewide seat belt use rate to be 84.7 percent.
- Five-year moving averages of occupant fatalities and severe injuries are presented and monitored for goal tracking in the Highway Safety Plan (HSP).
- Oklahoma has consistently performed attitudinal surveys to measure the Occupant Protection (OP) messaging.
- Oklahoma maintains scheduled child passenger safety observational surveys.

- Oklahoma understands the importance of nighttime seat belt use and requires all law enforcement agencies granted Occupant Protection funding perform at least ten percent of their enforcement to “evening, late evening, and darkness” hours.
- The State requires all law enforcement agencies that receive Occupant Protection funding to perform their own pre- and post-observational survey.
- Oklahoma Highway Safety Office maintains a user friendly and informative interactive crash map, as well as an easy-to-use Problem Identification table that is drop-down ready for law enforcement agencies across the State with relevant pre-populated data.
- Oklahoma maintains a grant management database that contains application, project, reimbursement data such as number of hours on OP enforcement, number of hours performing nighttime enforcement, number of contacts, etc.

7B. CHALLENGES

- Oklahoma does not have a statewide car seat inspection data collection process to record all car seat check data collected at inspection stations throughout the State. This data is critical to support program analysis.
 - Oklahoma Highway Safety Office does not provide a standard process for grantees to report seat check data.
 - Only grant-funded programs (Safe Kids Tulsa and Safe Kids Oklahoma) are expected to report car seat inspection data.
- From 2016 to 2019, Oklahoma had 197 traffic fatalities involving 16- to 19-year-olds, with 71 unrestrained. This is an identified high-risk population.
- The State has experienced challenges accessing Tribal crash data. Without complete data for all roadways it is difficult to complete a full problem identification and develop appropriate countermeasures.
- There is no evaluation comparing the low seat belt use rate counties alongside the law enforcement activity for occupant protection enforcement.
- Although electronic crash reporting is popular with law enforcement agencies, approximately 40 percent of agencies are submitting reports manually.
- Because there is no centralized, statewide citation database, there is no way to measure the consistency of occupant protection citations and determine whether those citations are being filed with the courts. This data could provide the State important information on

whether occupant protection projects are consistent statewide or experiencing issues in certain regions of the State when it comes to enforcement, prosecution, disposition or sentencing.

- The lack of data linkages creates missed data opportunities, specifically crash and injury linkage and how it could yield data on specific unbelted injury burden.
- Limited crash data is publicized immediately following a fatal or serious injury crash. Oklahoma Highway Patrol is the only agency reporting this data immediately to the Highway Safety Office (early notification) and their information only pertains to fatal crashes. This does not include information for occupant protection.
- Funding is only considered for an agency if they apply to the Highway Safety Office via the application process. This does not mean that highway safety resources are being used in areas of need within the State.

7C. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Implement the use of the National Digital Car Seat Check Form into all car seat events for timely and accurate reporting.
- **Utilize the teen specific crash data to help recruit additional high schools to participate in the State's teen led peer-to-peer Seatbelts Are For Everyone (SAFE) program and enlist new partners.**
- Coordinate data sharing from tribal communities that do share roadway data with those who do not in order to foster data relationships. Partner with the Indian Highway Safety Office in consultation with National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) regional office to coordinate these efforts.
- **Increase the opportunities for funding agencies that represent jurisdictions with a low seat belt use rate. Initiate and maintain an active relationship with the law enforcement and traffic safety professionals, advocates, and policy makers in those areas identified through crash and seat belt survey data.**
- **Encourage the remaining 40 percent of manual reporting law enforcement agencies to report crashes electronically.**
- Create an online portal for the public to view non identifying data pertaining to all crashes that also indicates whether adult seat belt or child passenger safety laws were followed.
- Create a centralized citation tracking system that follows the citation from issuance, through prosecution, disposition/sentencing and ultimately to the driver file.

- Task the Oklahoma Traffic Records Coordinating Committee to develop a plan to link data. Information, such as the cost of an unbelted injury, is vital in obtaining buy in from all highway safety partners including key decision makers.

AGENDA

Oklahoma Occupant Protection Assessment

Monday, June 7, 2021

9:30 am – 10:45 am – Interview 1
Program Management

Paul Harris, Oklahoma Highway Safety Office Director
Marie Moore, Oklahoma Highway Safety Office Chief of Finance
Cody McDonell, Oklahoma Highway Safety Office Communications Manager
Samantha Harcrow, Oklahoma Occupant Protection Program Manager

10:45 am – 11:05 am - Break

11:05 am – 12:10 am – Interview 2
Legislation, Regulation, and Policy

Sheridan O’Neil, Legislative Liaison, Department Public Safety
Kevin Burns, Department of Public Safety, Legal Division, Attorney V
Kimberly Dammen, Department of Public Safety, Legal Division, Administrative Program Office

12:10 pm – 1:10 pm – Lunch

1:10 pm – 2:20 pm – Interview 3
Child Passenger Safety

Jennifer Williams-Holland, Injury Prevention Oklahoma State Department of Health
Beth Washington, Project Director, Safe Kids Tulsa
Raquel Chisolm, Injury Prevention Specialist, Safe Kids Oklahoma

2:20 pm – 2:35
State Highway Safety Office Debrief/Questions from the day

2:35 pm – 2:55 pm - Break

2:55 pm – 3:25 pm – Assessment Team Debrief

3:25 pm – Until - Independent Writing

Tuesday, June 8, 2021

**9:30 am – 10:55 am – Interview 4
Communications**

Antoinette Short , Health Program Director, Safe Kids NA-I-SAH, Apache Tribe of Oklahoma
Cody McDonell, Oklahoma Highway Safety Office Communications Manager
Liz Gifford, CPSTI – Bi-Lingual, Communications and Outreach, Tulsa Safe Communities

10:55 am – 11:15 am – Break

**11:15 am – 12:25 pm – Interview 5
Outreach**

Tracy Wendling, Director of Injury Prevention, Oklahoma State Department of Health
Tabitha Harris, Tribal Injury Prevention Regional Coordinator
Dena Trosky, Traffic Safety Specialist, Oklahoma SAFE Project, “Seatbelts Are For Everyone”
– Teen Outreach Program

12:25 pm – 1:25 pm – Lunch

**1:25 pm – 2:35 pm – Interview 6
Enforcement**

Lt. Tommy Joyce, Project Manager, Oklahoma City Police Department Occupant Protection
Enforcement Project
Trooper Aaron Nickell, Oklahoma Highway Safety Office Impaired Driving Liaison, Oklahoma
Highway Patrol
Deputy James Caskey, Ret., Pottawatomie County Sheriff’s Office

2:35 pm – 2:55 pm – Break

**2:55 pm – 4:00 pm - Interview 7
Outreach 2**

Jenny Rollins, Metro Child Passenger Safety Coordinator, Safe Kids Tulsa Child Passenger
Safety Project
Mitizi Lee, Program Manager, Department of Human Services, Childcare Licensing Division
Sgt. Christy Yokley, Traffic Safety Educator, Oklahoma County Sheriff’s Office Traffic Safety
Education Project

**4:00 pm – 4:15 pm
State Highway Safety Office Debrief / Questions from the day**

4:15 pm – 4:45 pm - Assessment Team Debrief

4:45 pm – Until - Independent Writing

Wednesday, June 9, 2021

9:30 am – 10:55 am - Interview 8

Data and Evaluation

Renee Reuter, Oklahoma Highway Safety Office, Fatality Analysis Reporting System Analyst
Dr. Leann Laughbach, University of Central Oklahoma, Annual Seat Belt and Child Restraint Survey Project

Amy Graham, Oklahoma Highway Safety Office Data Analyst

10:55 am – 11:05 am – Break

11:05 am - 12:10 pm – Interview 9

Enforcement 2

Trooper Kane Wyatt, Oklahoma Highway Patrol Occupant Protection Enforcement Project
Chief Kelly Marshall, Choctaw Police Department Traffic Enforcement Project

12:15 pm – 12:30 pm

State Highway Safety Office Debrief/Questions from the day

12:30 pm – 1:00 pm – Assessment Team Debrief

1:10 pm – until – Lunch/ Independent Writing

Thursday, June 10, 2021

8:30 am – 12:00 am - Assessment Team will review the
draft report line-by-line and reach consensus on report and key recommendations

Team Member Discussion, Deliberation and Report Preparation

12:00 pm – 12:20 pm – Break

12:20 pm – 1:20 pm – Lunch

1:20 pm – Until finish - Assessment Team will continue to review the draft report line-by-line and reach consensus on report and key recommendations

Friday, June 11, 2021

9:30 am – 11:00am - Assessment Team report out to State, NHTSA, and others invited by State

ASSESSMENT TEAM CREDENTIALS

JENNIFER BOOGE

buckleupforlife@gmail.com

Jennifer Booge has a BS in Community Health Education from Moorhead State University and is a Child Passenger Safety (CPS) Liaison for the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Office of Traffic Safety. She has been a CPS Technician Instructor for fifteen years. For the past eleven years, she has coordinated programming efforts to 34 counties in northern Minnesota. Through these efforts and the hard work of many advocates around the region, northern Minnesota has reported a 39 percent decrease in childhood deaths and injuries with only three child fatalities since 2003.

Jennifer is the program manager for Mahube Community Council's nationally recognized Head Start-based CPS program. In addition, Jennifer coordinates Mahube's Safe Kids chapter. She has been a member of the Minnesota CPS Advisory Board since 2001 where she has played an active role in statewide curriculum development and revision. She is currently certified to instruct the NHTSA Technician and School Bus curriculum, Minnesota's standardized 16 hour CPS Practitioner training, Minnesota's Child Care/Foster Care curriculum as well as the Native American SNAP training. She has also received specialized training on transporting children with special health care needs.

She continues to work closely with Indian Reservations in a four-state region providing outreach, training, and assistance with program development. She also specializes in school bus transportation, working closely with Head Start programs and transportation directors by provide specialized training and resources related to preschool and special needs transportation.

Jennifer is formerly the Vice Chair of the National Child Passenger Safety Board. She was also the former chairperson of the Quality Assurance Committee. Jennifer is dedicated to promoting child passenger safety and occupant protection in an effort to reduce the number of children and adults injured or killed on our nation's highways.

GLENN CRAMER

gmcramer1@comcast.net

Glenn Cramer is a private traffic safety consultant who is on contract with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), Region 10 to provide law enforcement outreach in the Pacific Northwest.

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.

As a captain 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. Glenn served as the commander of the Budget and Fiscal Office where he was involved with coordinating, planning, developing, and oversight of the WSP's \$365 million biennial budget request.

Additionally, Glenn also served as a captain in the Field Operations Bureau where he was the district commander for southwest Washington (Vancouver) overseeing the WSP's traffic law enforcement activities in five counties.

TROY E. COSTALES

troy.costales@comcast.net

Mr. Costales has been the state of Oregon's Transportation Safety Division Administrator and Governor's Highway Safety Representative since September of 1997. During his time as the Governor's Representative he has worked for three different Governors. Troy has over 30 years of experience in Transportation Safety, including 20 as the Administrator of the Division. He is a member of the executive management team for the Oregon Department of Transportation.

Mr. Costales was the 2011-2012 Chairman of the Governor's Highway Safety Association. 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, and the International Association of Chiefs of Police - Drug Evaluation and Classification Program Technical Advisory Panel, and many others. He has been part of the faculty for the GHSA Executive Training Seminar for the past fifteen years.

Under Mr. Costales' leadership, Oregon has seen a dramatic decline in traffic fatalities and injuries, to the lowest levels since 1944. The number of individuals injured in traffic crashes has declined more than 30 percent since its peak of 39,000 in 1996. In addition, Oregon started a strong graduated driver license program that includes an incentive for driver education. Over the past eight years, the number of 16-year-old drivers involved in fatal and injury crashes has declined over 60 percent. Oregon continues to post one of the highest safety belt use rates in the nation at 98 percent. With the decline in the overall fatality toll, the number of alcohol-involved fatalities has also decreased by double-digit percentages in this past decade.

Mr. Costales was a member and chairman for several driver education, occupant protection and impaired driving program assessments over the past fifteen years.

MANDY KLIETHERMES

markmandy13@hotmail.com

Mandy Kliethermes has been an employee for the State of Missouri for almost 20 years, beginning her career at the Missouri State Highway Patrol as a data entry operator for the DWI Tracking System (DWITS), then becoming the section supervisor, for a total of 7 years with the agency. Mandy then went on to become the Functional Specification Technician and Trainer for the Office of State Courts Administrator for 8 years, where she assisted in developing the programing to transfer prosecutor information to the Missouri State Highway Patrol DWITS program, as well as the Criminal Records Repository.

For almost 5 years, Mandy has been a Law Enforcement Grant Manager, as well as the Traffic Records Coordinator for the Missouri Department of Transportation, Highway Safety and Traffic Division, while utilizing her experience, relationships and knowledge from all previous positions within the state. Mandy has performed multiple Traffic Records Assessments, has successfully increased the strength of the Traffic Records Coordinating Committee, manages multiple highway safety programs and assists agencies in reducing serious injuries and deaths on Missouri roadways.

ANNE READETT
areadett@gmail.com

Education:

M.S.A., Central Michigan University, 1993, general administration

M.A., Michigan State University, 1986, journalism

B.A., Central Michigan University, 1983, journalism major, marketing minor, cum laude

Work experience:

Chief, Communications Section, Office of Highway Safety Planning, Lansing

1993-present

- Implement research-based targeted communications programs to help Michigan increase seat belt use. Achieved highest safety belt use rate in the nation in 2008 and 2009.
- Develop annual strategic communications objectives to support programs most likely to reduce traffic deaths and injuries.
- Oversee annual budget of more than \$3 million, including paid advertising and creative agency contract services.
- Supervise four-person section of communications specialists and graphic designer.
- Directed annual Michigan Traffic Safety Summit, a three-day meeting of more than 400 traffic safety advocates.

Deputy Director, Senate Majority Communications Office, Lansing

1987-1993

- Supervised writing team and edited written material for grammar, style and content. Central contact for Senate office requests for news releases, press conferences, newsletters and speeches, making assignments to staff. Handled daily media relations.

Staff Writer, The Stroh Brewery Company, Detroit

1986-1987

- Edited nationally distributed monthly magazine for employees and wholesalers. Improved content and design.
- Assisted with publicity efforts for Stroh's Montreux Detroit Jazz Festival, Chene Park Arts Festival, Black Music Month and Stroh's Run for Liberty III.

Editorial Assistant, Lansing State Journal, Lansing 1984-1986

Graduate Assistant, Michigan State University, School of Journalism, 1984-1986.

- Taught beginning news writing courses.

Reporter, Three Rivers Commercial, Three Rivers

1983-1984

Other:

- 69 awards for traffic safety communications, 1995-2015
- Vice chair, League of Michigan Bicyclists
- Board member, Lansing Area Safety Council

- Accreditation Committee Chair, Central Michigan Public Relations Society of America chapter; president 2009 and 2010; accredited by the Public Relations Society of America
- Awarded the CMPRSA PaceMaker PR Practitioner of the Year 2007
- Former board member and president, Michigan State University College of Communication Arts and Sciences Alumni Board of Directors

