

## Why Safe Routes to School?

### Safety

Safe Routes to School programs help communities create safer walking and biking routes in the vicinity of schools, so parents are comfortable allowing their children to walk and bike to school.

### Health

In the past decade, the number of active children in the United States has decreased, and the nationwide childhood obesity rate has increased. To reverse this trend, Safe Routes to School programs encourage children to be more active by walking and biking to school.

### Environment

As more children walk and bike to school, traffic volume and congestion decreases. Reducing the number of vehicles in the vicinity of schools reduces the risk of crashes, improves air quality, and decreases health problems such as asthma.

## Find out more

Whether you are a parent, teacher, or a community member, you can start a Safe Routes to School program.

### Contact

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Safe Routes to School is a federally-funded program that enables and encourages children grades K–8 to walk and bike to school.



## *Planning a Safe Routes to School program*

### **Involve the entire community**

Start a committee or task force that includes as many relevant groups as possible. Meet with teachers, parents, PTOs, government officials, law enforcement officers, politicians, local businesses, non-profit organizations, urban planners, engineers, neighborhood associations, and local health officials. Involving every sector of the community produces the most effective and thorough plan.

### **Collect data through surveys**

Start by surveying how many children walk and bike to school. Also, use surveys to determine how students and parents choose whether to bike and/or walk to school.

Information collected from surveys is crucial to discovering problems now and evaluating your Safe Routes to School program later.

### **Map your community**

Create maps of the current routes children use to walk and bicycle to school. Indicate unsafe areas on those routes. Map alternative safe routes for walking and bicycling to school.

### **Analyze problems**

Based on information from the surveys and the mapping project, discuss the findings with the entire community. Make a list of the problems and possible solutions.

### **Identify projects needed in your community**

Consider all resources available to your community, including but not limited to Safe Routes to School funding. Communities should encourage walking and biking through infrastructure improvements and non-infrastructure activities, such as educational and law enforcement efforts.

## *Safe Routes to School funding*

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) Safe Routes to School program funds a variety of projects that encourage children to walk and bicycle safely to school. Projects eligible for Safe Routes to School funding must be within two miles of an elementary or middle school that serves kindergarten through eighth grade students. Grants are awarded through a statewide competitive process.

Because Safe Routes to School is a reimbursement program, sponsors are required to complete their project and then request reimbursement from WisDOT.

### **Infrastructure-related projects**

Funds are available for planning, design, and construction of infrastructure that will enable students to walk and bicycle to school, such as:

- » Traffic calming and speed reduction improvements
- » Pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements
- » On-street bicycle facilities
- » Off-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities
- » Secure bicycle parking facilities
- » Sidewalk improvements

### **Non-infrastructure-related projects**

Funds are available for programs and projects that encourage walking and bicycling to schools, such as:

- » Developing a Safe Routes to School plan, including costs for data collection, analysis, and evaluation
- » Public awareness campaigns and outreach to news media and community leaders
- » Traffic education and enforcement in the vicinity of schools
- » Creation and reproduction of promotional and educational materials
- » Bicycle and pedestrian safety curricula, materials, and trainers
- » Equipment and training needed to establish crossing guard programs
- » Modest incentives for contests or events

