# Behavioral Traffic Safety Cooperative Research Program

## Fiscal Year 2025

## Announcement of Research Projects

The **Behavioral Traffic Safety Cooperative Research Program** (BTSCRP) is an applied contract research program that provides practical and timely solutions to problems facing State Highway Safety Offices, State DOTs, law enforcement agencies, and other stakeholders.

Each year, the Governors Highway Safety Association refers a research program to the TRB consisting of high-priority problems for which solutions are required by the traffic safety community. The BTSCRP program for FY2025 is expected to include a minimum of six (6) new projects.

This announcement contains preliminary descriptions of only those new projects expected to be advertised for competitive proposals, and for which nominations for qualified professionals to serve on research oversight panels are sought. Nominations will be accepted on the TRB website through MyTRB at https://volunteer.mytrb.org/Panel/AvailableProjects

Before nominating yourself to serve as a panel member, please review our Conflict of Interest policy: https://www.trb.org/NCHRP/COI-CRP.aspx. Please be advised that if you are selected to serve on a panel and we receive a proposal for that project that presents a conflict of interest for you, we will reject the proposal. This also applies to liaisons.

**Detailed Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for these new projects will be developed beginning in October 2024. Please note that BTSCRP requests for proposals (RFPs) are available only on the TRB website. Those who have an interest in receiving RFPs can register on the website http://trb.org/btscrp. Upon registration, you will receive an e-mail notification of every RFP posting and an e-mail notification of new anticipated projects in future years.**

Because BTSCRP projects seek practical remedies for traffic safety problems, proposals should demonstrate strong capability gained through extensive successful experiences in the relevant problem area. Consequently, any agency interested in submitting a proposal should first make a thorough self-appraisal to determine whether it possesses the capability and experience necessary to ensure successful completion of the project. The specifications for preparing proposals are set forth in the brochure titled *Information and Instructions for Preparing Proposals*. **Proposals will be rejected if they are not prepared in strict conformance with the section titled "Instructions for Preparing and Submitting Proposals."** The brochure is available on the Internet at the website referenced above.

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**IMPORTANT NOTICE**

**Potential proposers should understand clearly that the research program described herein is tentative.** The final program will depend on the level of funding available from the Federal-aid apportionments for FY 2024. Meanwhile, to ensure that research contracts can be executed as soon as possible after the beginning of the fiscal year, the BTSCRP is proceeding with the customary sequence of events through the point of research agency selection for all projects. The first round of detailed Requests for Proposals will be available starting in October 2024; proposals will be due beginning in November 2024, and research agency selections will be made beginning in January 2025. This places the risk of incurring proposal costs at the election of the research agencies. Beyond the point of selecting agencies, all activity relative to the FY 2025 program will cease until the funding authorization is known. These circumstances of uncertainty are beyond BTSCRP control and are covered here so that potential proposers will be aware of the risk inherent in electing to propose on tentative projects.

**Behavioral Traffic Safety Cooperative Research Program**

**BTSCRP FY 2025**

| Problem Statement | Title | Allocation |
|---|---|---|
| BTS-37 | Equitable Driving Training for All Youth | $300,000 |
| BTS-38 | Slow Down Move Over Best Practices | $550,000 |
| BTS-39 | The Last Impaired Mile: Challenges of Impaired Mobility in a Multimodal World | $250,000 |
| BTS-40 | Workplace-Based Approaches to Improve Driver Behavior and Reduce Crashes | $300,000 |
| BTS-41 | The Future Use of Law Enforcement Personnel and Traffic Safety Enforcement | $460,000 |
| BTS-42 | The Future of Automated Traffic Enforcement and Public Acceptance | $350,000 |

**Project BTS-37**
***Equitable Driving Training for All Youth***

Source: GHSA
Allocation: $300,000
BTSCRP Staff: Richard Retting

Equitable access to driver training for youth presents a significant challenge. Research has identified disparities in the quality, availability, and affordability of driver education across different communities, particularly impacting low-income and rural areas. Lack of equitable driver training contributes to varying levels of driving skill and knowledge among young drivers, potentially leading to increased risks on the road. There is a need to understand the root causes of these disparities and their impact on traffic safety. Investigating gaps in driver education could identify specific barriers young drivers face in accessing quality training, including socioeconomic factors, geographic limitations, and potential biases in current training programs. Findings could be used by state highway safety offices (SHSOs) to develop targeted strategies to address these disparities.

The objective of this research is to identify effective strategies and best practices for SHSOs to make driver education accessible to all students equitably, particularly through Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs. This research aims to produce the following outcomes:

- Understand barriers that prevent equitable access to driver education for all students.
- Assess how current CTE programs do or do not integrate driver education and identify gaps or areas for improvement.
- Formulate best practices for SHSOs in making driver education more accessible.
- Provide policy recommendations for incorporating driver education into CTE curriculums uniformly across states, ensuring that these programs meet the necessary safety standards and are tailored to address the needs of diverse student populations.
- Develop models that can be adapted and scaled by different states, considering their unique demographic and geographic contexts, to make driver education accessible through CTE.
- Propose a framework for ongoing evaluation and improvement of driver education programs within CTE, ensuring they remain responsive to changing needs and advancements in driving safety.

By achieving these outcomes, the research will contribute significantly to the field of traffic safety, particularly in enhancing the quality and accessibility of driver education for all students, thereby fostering safer driving behaviors among young drivers.

The research would need to account for varying policies across states, and any recommendations would need to be generalizable to different state practices.

**Project BTS-38**
***Slow Down Move Over Best Practices***

Source: GHSA
Allocation: $550,000
BTSCRP Staff: Richard Retting

Slow Down Move Over (SDMO) laws, which have been enacted by all states, represent a new and potentially misunderstood measure to protect first responders and disabled motorists from dangers associated with being stopped along roadways. It is estimated that one-third of Americans are not aware of these laws. Violation of SDMO laws can result in fines and in some cases jail time. State highway safety offices (SHSOs) are looking for ways to support SDMOs.

It is not clear to all drivers what conditions warrant SDMO action. And there is a knowledge gap regarding best practices for educating, enforcing, and promoting consistent and effective responses by all drivers. To improve the effectiveness of SDMO laws, efforts are needed to better ensure the driving population is aware of, and properly understands, what is expected of them under these laws.

The objectives of this research are to 1) understand the current state of practice and legal nuances that differ among jurisdictions and 2) develop a toolkit of practical strategies for SHSOs and other stakeholders to effectively communicate the goals of implementation and requirements for drivers to realize safety improvements.

**Project BTS-39**
***The Last Impaired Mile: Challenges of Impaired Mobility in a Multimodal World***

Source: GHSA
Allocation: $250,000
BTSCRP Staff: Richard Retting

The traffic safety community has worked for decades to put a taboo on impaired driving. While there remains a great deal of work still to do, progress has been made. For example, in recent years there has been anecdotal evidence of an increase in the number of individuals who drive to the end of a transit or commuter rail line, take transit or commuter rail into the city where they become impaired, take transit or commuter rail back to their car, and then drive home once returning to their car. This creates a new challenge, especially in suburban and rural areas which have limited options for traveling that so-called "last mile". While progress has been made in reducing the overall number of impaired miles traveled, addressing safety concerns associated with the "last mile" remains a significant challenge.

The objectives of this research are to 1) develop an improved understanding of the scope of the "last mile" problem in multimodal environments; 2) explore behavioral and risk factors that could be altered to change driver behavior; and 3) develop a toolkit of practical strategies for state highway safety offices and other stakeholders to help close the gap. Research questions addressed by the study might include:

- What is the extent of the problem – how many individuals are exiting transit and commuter rail stations in the last few stops impaired by drugs or alcohol, and how many individuals are then driving a vehicle to get home?
- What policy changes could be implemented to change behavior?
- How can the regional highway safety partners extend the risk perception of impairment to include that last mile traveled?

**Project BTS-40**
***Workplace-Based Approaches to Improve Driver Behavior and Reduce Crashes***

Source: GHSA
Allocation: $300,000
BTSCRP Staff: Richard Retting

Injuries from motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of workplace death and a top cause of death for most age groups in the workforce. Medically consulted injuries in motor-vehicle incidents totaled 5.4 million in 2021, and total motor-vehicle injury costs were estimated at $498.3 billion.

Social norms learned in the workplace can affect our daily lives. An individual's feelings of safety and security are influenced by workplace culture. More information is needed to demonstrate the effectiveness of traffic safety programs delivered in the workplace setting and how best practices can be replicated from States with current workplace-based traffic safety programs.

The objectives of this research are to 1) identify resources that utilize countermeasures proven most effective in raising awareness of the risk of motor vehicle crashes both on and off the job, and 2) provide actionable program tools (e.g., policy toolkits, infographics, employer-training modules, traffic safety outreach and education materials) for state highway safety offices and other stakeholders to engage workplaces and elevate traffic safety as a priority.

Similar to programs through which employees receive information on how to lower their blood pressure as a risk factor to heart disease and tobacco cessation tools to lower the risk of stroke and increase other health benefits, the workplace can be an effective conduit to share traffic safety information to homes and communities, potentially leading to fewer crashes, lost lives and debilitating injuries and cost savings to employers, such as lower workers compensation and employee plus family health insurance costs. The desired outcome of the project will provide states with resources (and best practices), equip workplaces to deliver traffic safety education to their employees, save costs and save lives.

**Project BTS-41**
***The Future Use of Law Enforcement Personnel and Traffic Safety Enforcement***

Source: GHSA
Allocation: $460,000
BTSCRP Staff: Richard Retting

In recent years the role of traffic law enforcement, and its function, have changed. And the numbers of sworn law enforcement officers in many jurisdictions have declined due to increased vacancy rates. Many states have placed limitations on law enforcement personnel efforts to engage in traffic safety law enforcement in various ways.

Going forward, two relevant questions for state highway safety offices (SHSOs) and law enforcement leadership are 1) does the public accept and want police to enforce traffic safety laws? and 2) what should be the future role of law enforcement officers in traffic safety enforcement?

The objective of this is research is to provide public policy guidance for decisionmakers on the role of law enforcement in traffic safety enforcement. This study should also involve a reliable measure of public sentiment on the role of traditional law enforcement engagement on traffic safety enforcement. Deliverables produced through this research should be designed to support the work of SHSOs, and law enforcement leaders at the state and local levels. Findings (when available) from BTSCRP Project BTS-31, *Quantifying Impacts of Traffic Enforcement Activity Levels on Safety*, should be incorporated into the research effort.

**Project BTS-42**
***The Future of Automated Traffic Enforcement and Public Acceptance***

Source: GHSA
Allocation: $350,000
BTSCRP Staff: Richard Retting

Automated enforcement is widely used as a supplement to the traditional use of law enforcement officers. The use of photo enforcement technology has increased in recent years following societal questioning of the use of law enforcement officers for traffic enforcement, as well as increasing officer vacancy rates in many law enforcement agencies. It would be useful to conduct a detailed and comprehensive assessment of the efficacy and efficiency of automated traffic enforcement to assist future public policy development, with consideration of (but not limited to) the following research questions:

- How effective is automated enforcement technology in the United States, and how is it accepted by the public?
- Can an automated enforcement program be implemented and generate public acceptance and compliance with traffic safety laws?
- Can tolling systems be used to detect and deter speeding violations?
- What approach is best suited to address the public perception that automated traffic enforcement is used primarily to generate revenue?

The objectives of this is research are to 1) conduct a comprehensive assessment of automated traffic law enforcement to assist in the public policy discussion of the future of traffic enforcement across the nation and 2) develop a toolkit for state highway safety offices and other stakeholders to support implementation of automated enforcement in a manner that minimizes public and political opposition. It is important to research and understand the applicability of automated traffic enforcement beyond the school and work zones.