



THE ROAD TO ZERO AT 10 YEARS

A Decade of Partnership.
A Stronger Path to Zero.

 **nsc**
National Safety Council

A decade ago, transportation leaders knew roadway safety was headed in the wrong direction. Fatalities in the United States remained stubbornly high compared to other developed countries, and the nation had no clear framework in place to address this leading cause of preventable death. In 2016, leaders across sectors, including federal agencies, safety organizations, industry and communities, came together with a single, ambitious goal: to eliminate roadway deaths by 2050.

The **Road to Zero Coalition** was formed to align the field, elevate what works, and accelerate progress. Ten years later that alignment has taken hold.

Since the Coalition's founding, progress has been incremental and unpredictable. Deaths rose sharply in the years following the launch of the Coalition, likely due to the societal upheavals that accompanied the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath. But in the past two years, we have begun to see meaningful change. Preliminary estimates from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration show 2025 fatalities at their lowest levels since 2019.

That progress is not accidental. It is the result of intentional shifts in public policy, investments in safer roadway design, advances in technology, and a federal commitment to the Safe System Approach. The Road to Zero Coalition and its 2,000 member organizations have played a central role in advancing these strategies and ensuring they move from concept to practice.

FROM RESEARCH TO PRACTICE

One of the Road to Zero Coalition's most important contributions over the last decade has been translating research into practice through its Community Traffic Safety Grants. To date, nearly 50 municipal governments, nonprofits and universities have received funding to test new ideas by devising practical solutions in real communities. The projects have addressed our most persistent road safety challenges, focusing on improving post-crash care, designing safer streets, influencing driving behavior, and exploring emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence and autonomous vehicles. They execute small-scale projects with large-scale potential and provide real-world results that can be further tested, evaluated and applied to other communities.



REAL-WORLD IMPACT

Impact across the grantees does not look the same in every community or domain of roadway safety. The Community Traffic Safety Grants are designed to seed progress, allowing awardees to test solutions that reflect their unique risks, environments and needs while still offering solutions and lessons that can be applied to other communities across the United States.

In some localities, impact is immediate and visible, showing changes in driver behavior, reduced speeds or fewer crashes along a high-risk corridor. In others, it is foundational to the transformation of roadway safety culture by building capacity, strengthening systems or advancing new approaches that will shape safety over time.



In **Boston**, the “Safest Driver” competition demonstrated the power of behavior-based feedback. Nearly 5,000 drivers logged **2.9a million miles** through anonymized data in a telematics app that rated their performance at the end of each trip. The project saw a **33% decrease in risky behaviors, a 48% decrease in distraction and a 38% reduction in speeding.**

In **Nevada**, a partnership between the Nevada Highway Patrol and Waycare, an AI company, used predictive analysis to identify high-risk corridors. By aligning high-visibility law enforcement with real-time data, the program achieved an 18% reduction in primary crashes and a 43% reduction in the percentage of speeding drivers along two highways in the southern part of the state. The program saved an estimated \$3 million in property damage, medical costs and productivity loss.





In **Colorado**, innovation has focused on survivability. The Colorado Whole Blood Coalition enables trained paramedics to administer whole-blood transfusions to crash victims before they arrive at the hospital. In its early months, the program has already saved lives, demonstrating how this improvement to post-crash care can directly reduce fatalities.

In **Florida**, a grant awarded to the University of Miami's BikeSafe Program supported hands on work with Miami Dade County Public Schools to pilot quick build safe streets treatments – including a temporary protected bike lane, pedestrian crossings and traffic-calming measures – around elementary schools. The improvements helped reduce vehicle drop-off traffic by 34%, sparking strong parental support for permanent changes.



And in tribal communities, including the Pueblo of Jemez (NM), Cherokee Nation (OK), and Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (MT), quick-build infrastructure projects have shown how low-cost design changes can slow traffic and improve roadway safety immediately.

Current grantees are focused on innovation and the potential of technology to save lives. These 2025 projects include programs employing artificial intelligence to proactively identify and mitigate crash risks; developing virtual reality simulation training to improve post-crash care; leveraging digital twin technology to enhance safety in highly autonomous vehicles; and more.



KNOWLEDGE THAT MOVES THE FIELD

Beyond individual projects, the Road to Zero Coalition has convened roadway safety researchers practitioners and policymakers to share knowledge and advance best practices among stakeholders, advocates and members of the public

Since 2020, the Coalition has hosted dozens of webinars featuring a host of expert speakers, including representatives from law enforcement, universities and federal agencies such as NHTSA, FHWA, NTSB and more. In 2024 alone the webinars reached 2,500 participants on topics ranging from the challenges facing older drivers to expanding intelligent speed assistance. In addition, Community Traffic Safety grantees share their progress and results through webinars and at the Road to Zero Annual Meeting, which convenes representatives of all sectors to discuss challenges, lessons and solutions for roadway safety.

LESSONS LEARNED

The first decade of the Road to Zero Coalition was not just about bringing partners together. It was about testing, piloting, sharing ideas, and learning what works. Across communities nationwide, the Road to Zero Coalition built a foundation of innovation and shared practice. The past decade points to a clear set of insights:

- **Community-Based Interventions Deliver Results**

When communities redesign roads, set speeds that match the roadway environment, and implement precise and consistent enforcement, driver behavior can change.

- **Behavioral Strategies Have Impact**

Education and awareness can reach targeted populations and influence everyday decisions.

- **Post-Crash Care Is an Underutilized Lever**

Improving response time and trauma care can significantly increase survival rates, particularly for rural communities where traffic fatalities remain disproportionately high.

- **Emerging Technologies Offer Powerful Potential**

AI, data systems and advanced vehicle technologies hold promise, but must be deployed in ways that produce real-world outcomes.



THE ROAD AHEAD

The coming decade must build on the Coalition's strong foundation by accelerating and scaling solutions to reach more communities, more consistently, and with lasting impact.

To accelerate progress, efforts should:

- **Address the Behaviors Driving Fatalities**

Speeding, distraction, impairment and lack of seat restraint use remain significant challenges. Proven interventions and novel technologies must be expanded, researched and sustained.

- **Strengthen Post-Crash Survivability**

Reducing fatalities must consider what happens after a crash, particularly in rural areas and on high-injury networks.

- **Move from Pilots to Scale**

The Community Traffic Safety Grants have demonstrated what works. The next step is to make solutions easier to replicate and adopt.

- **Apply Innovation with Purpose**

Innovations must be tested, improved and scaled to deliver measurable outcomes while ensuring new technologies strengthen the safety system.

The Road to Zero Coalition is poised to lead the next ten years and beyond. The Coalition brings together the right partners, connects the best research to practice, and fosters innovation and accountability.

Roadway deaths are a national crisis as well as individual tragedies, impacting the safety of everyone in our nation. As trusted sources for what works and accelerators of ideas to practice, the Road to Zero Coalition and the National Safety Council coalesce theories into results. The solutions they foster will help save lives, until we reach our goal of making sure everyone gets home safely from every trip.

Even one death is too many.

Zero is the only goal.