Tennessee
Highway
Safety Office

FFY 2027 - 2029

# TENNESSEE TRIENNIAL HIGHWAY SAFETY PLAN

**Governor**
Bill Lee

**Commissioner**
Jeff Long

**Director**
Clyde “Buddy” Lewis

TN Department of Safety & Homeland Security

TENNESSEE HIGHWAY SAFETY OFFICE
helping you ARRIVE

# TABLE OF CONTENTS


Commonly Used Abbreviations..... 3
Highway Safety Planning Process..... 6
- Description of Highway Safety Problems..... 8
- Methods for Project Selection..... 9

List of Data Sources..... 10
Description of Outcomes..... 13
Performance Report..... 14
Performance Plan..... 20
Planning and Administration.....33
Program Areas
- Police Traffic Services..... 39
- Occupant Protection.....50
- Traffic Records .....79
- Impaired Driving .....86
- Motorcycle Safety.....107
- Non-Motorized Safety..... 115
- Distracted Driving Prevention.....125
- Community Traffic Safety Program.....137
- Emergency Medical Services .....144
- Older Driver Safety.....155
- Young Driver Safety.....162

# A COMMONLY USED ABBREVIATIONS

| Abbreviation | Full Term | Abbreviation | Full Term |
|---|---|---|---|
| **AAA** | American Automobile Association | **DOT** | Department of Transportation |
| **ARIDE** | Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement | **DOSCI** | Drivers Orientation Screen for Cognitive Impairment |
| **ARF** | Annual Report File | **DRE** | Drug Recognition Expert |
| **ASL** | American Sign Language | **DUI** | Driving Under the Influence |
| **BAC** | Blood Alcohol Concentration | **DWI** | Driving While Intoxicated |
| **BI** | Business Intelligence | **EMS** | Emergency Medical Services |
| **BIL** | Bipartisan Infrastructure Law | **EMT** | Emergency Medical Technician |
| **BITZ** | Be In The Zone | **FARS** | Fatality Analysis Reporting System |
| **CDC** | Centers for Disease Control and Prevention | **FAST Act** | Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act |
| **CFR** | Code of Federal Regulations | **FFY** | Federal Fiscal Year |
| **CPS** | Child Passenger Safety | **FHWA** | Federal Highway Administration |
| **CPSTs** | Child Passenger Safety Technicians | **FTS** | Fatal Traffic Summary |
| **CTW** | Countermeasures That Work | **GIS** | Geographic Information System |
| **DDPPC** | Developmental Disabilities Planning and Policy Council | **GHSA** | Governors Highway Safety Association |

# A COMMONLY USED ABBREVIATIONS

| Abbreviation | Full Term | Abbreviation | Full Term |
|---|---|---|---|
| **GPS** | Global Positioning System | **OTT** | Over-the-Top Television |
| **HSP** | Highway Safety Plan | **P&A** | Planning and Administration |
| **HVE** | High-Visibility Enforcement | **PIO** | Public Information Officer |
| **IDD** | Intellectual and Developmental Disability | **PPE** | Public Participation and Engagement |
| **IDAC** | Impaired Driving Advisory Council | **PTS** | Police Traffic Services |
| **IID** | Ignition Interlock Device | **QR** | Quick Response (code) |
| **JOL** | Judicial Outreach Liaison | **SHSP** | Strategic Highway Safety Plan |
| **LEL** | Law Enforcement Liaison | **SVI** | Social Vulnerability Index |
| **LRS** | Linear Referencing System | **TDOSHS** | Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security |
| **MADD** | Mothers Against Drunk Driving | **TDOT** | Tennessee Department of Transportation |
| **NDCF** | National Digital Car Seat Check Form | **TBI** | Tennessee Bureau of Investigation |
| **NHTSA** | National Highway Traffic Safety Administration | **THP** | Tennessee Highway Patrol |
| **OOH** | Out-of-Home (advertising) | **THSO** | Tennessee Highway Safety Office |

# A COMMONLY USED ABBREVIATIONS

| Abbreviation | Full Term | Abbreviation | Full Term |
|---|---|---|---|
| **TITAN** | Tennessee Integrated Traffic Analysis Network | **TTU** | Tennessee Technological University |
| **TNOPC** | Tennessee Network of Occupant Protection Coalition | **TZD** | Toward Zero Deaths |
| **TRCC** | Traffic Records Coordinating Committee | **VMT** | Vehicle Miles Traveled |
| **TRIMS** | Tennessee Roadway Information Management System | **WISQARS** | Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System |
| **TSRP** | Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor | **3HSP** | Triennial Highway Safety Plan |

# HIGHWAY SAFETY PLANNING PROCESS

## Planning Process

The Tennessee Highway Safety Office (THSO) employs a systematic, data-driven planning process to identify the state's most significant traffic safety challenges and develop targeted strategies to address them. Problem identification, public participation and engagement, performance measure development, and countermeasure strategy selection are all grounded in a thorough analysis of quality data sources, including fatality and injury crash data, enforcement and judicial records, geospatial analysis, and sociodemographic information. This approach ensures that resource allocation decisions are evidence-based and responsive to the full range of highway safety problems present across Tennessee's urban, suburban, and rural communities.

Central to this process is ongoing input from program-specific advisory bodies convened around each major highway safety emphasis area. Each body is structured in accordance with the applicable highway safety program guidelines for its area, with membership drawn from the agencies, organizations, and systems that most directly interact with that area's safety challenges. Across these councils, representation consistently spans law enforcement, the criminal justice system, public health, state and local government, data and traffic records, treatment and rehabilitation, and communications. Through this structure, the THSO ensures that planning decisions reflect a broad cross-section of expertise and that strategies are grounded in the realities of how highway safety problems manifest and are addressed across Tennessee.

The Impaired Driving Advisory Council (IDAC) serves as one example of how this approach works in practice. Established in 2013, the IDAC meets regularly to identify and prioritize Tennessee's most pressing impaired driving issues, recommend best practices, and develop multi-year strategic direction in support of THSO's mission. Its membership reflects the full ecosystem of agencies and institutions involved in preventing, responding to, and adjudicating impaired driving. At a minimum, the IDAC includes representation from law enforcement and the criminal justice system, including prosecution, adjudication, and

probation and parole; driver licensing; treatment and rehabilitation; ignition interlock programs; data and traffic records; public health; communications; and the THSO. In practice, that representation spans agencies such as:

- AAA (communications and public awareness)
- Administrative Office of the Courts (adjudication)
- District Attorneys General Conference (prosecution)
- Federal Highway Administration, Tennessee Division (data and traffic records)
- Hamilton County/Chattanooga Division IV General Sessions Court (adjudication)
- Judicial Outreach Liaison, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville (adjudication)
- Local law enforcement agencies, including municipal police departments and sheriff's offices (enforcement)
- Mothers Against Drunk Driving (public awareness and victim advocacy)
- Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County (probation and parole)
- Research, Planning, and Development Division/TITAN, Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security (data and traffic records)
- Tennessee Association of Chiefs of Police (law enforcement)
- Tennessee Alcoholic Beverage Commission (alcohol regulation and enforcement)
- Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (criminal justice system; data and traffic records)
- Tennessee Department of Correction (corrections; probation and parole)
- Tennessee Department of Health (public health)
- Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (treatment and rehabilitation)
- Tennessee Department of Transportation (engineering and infrastructure safety)
- Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security (communications and public relations; driver licensing; ignition interlock)
- Tennessee Highway Safety Office

# Description of Highway Safety Problems

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Tennessee encompasses 41,227 square miles and borders eight states: Mississippi, Georgia, North Carolina, Virginia, Kentucky, Missouri, Arkansas, and Alabama. As of July 2024, the state's population stands at 7,227,750 and continues to grow, with Tennessee adding more than 79,000 residents between 2023 and 2024 alone (U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program, 2024). The state maintains 1,233 miles of interstate highway (TDOT) and a road network serving a diverse mix of travel patterns, from dense urban corridors to remote rural roads, each presenting distinct traffic safety challenges.

The THSO, in coordination with the NHTSA Regional Program Manager, analyzes crash data to identify the high-priority areas that will be addressed through Section 402 and Section 405 funding across FFY 2027, 2028, and 2029. Problem identification draws on multiple data systems. Tennessee crash data is analyzed through the Tennessee Integrated Traffic Analysis Network (TITAN), maintained by TDOSHS, which supports both statewide trend analysis and county-level breakdowns. National fatality data is drawn from NHTSA's Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS), a nationwide census of fatal motor vehicle crashes that provides a consistent basis for tracking fatality trends over time and benchmarking Tennessee's performance against national patterns. Together, these sources give THSO and potential subgrantees a layered picture of where highway safety problems are most acute and how they are changing. A public-facing TITAN dashboard is available through TNTrafficSafety.org and linked directly within the grant application to support local problem identification efforts.

Problem identification begins with a review of at least five years of trend data. Throughout the lifespan of this plan, programs addressing the following highway safety problems will be characterized as high-priority areas: a low rate of seat belt usage, including child passenger safety restraint usage; a high rate of crashes in which impairment is a contributing factor; a high rate of crashes in which speeding is a contributing factor; a high rate of crashes involving drivers under 20 years of age; a high rate of crashes involving an aggressive driver; a high rate of crashes involving a pedestrian or bicyclist; a high rate of crashes involving an older driver; and a high rate of crashes resulting in serious injury or fatality.

# Methods for Project Selection

Once high-priority areas are identified, the THSO uses a structured process to translate problem identification into funded projects. The review begins with five years of statewide trend data drawn from TITAN and FARS, followed by a review of subgrantee annual reports to give management staff a clear picture of what has worked, where gaps remain, and which problems persist across communities. The THSO also coordinates with Tennessee's Strategic Highway Safety Plan 2025—2029, developed through a data-driven, multidisciplinary process by TDOT and its safety partners, including TDOSHS and the Federal Highway Administration, and committed to a proactive approach toward zero deaths. Alignment between the 3HSP and the SHSP ensures that federal highway safety investments complement the state's broader safety roadmap across all four Es: engineering, education, enforcement, and emergency response.

Grant opportunities are announced through direct mail and email to potential state and local subgrantees, including all police chiefs and sheriffs, and are posted on TNTrafficSafety.org and THSO's social media channels. Applicants are expected to submit proposals that document a data-driven local highway safety problem, identify an evidence-based intervention with a reasonable probability of effectiveness, and describe how program outcomes will be measured. Each application is reviewed and scored against THSO's goals, objectives, and project design requirements. Management staff then weigh additional considerations including past grant performance, likelihood of meaningful crash reduction, and whether the project addresses multiple jurisdictions.

Funding allocation is guided by a data-driven ranking tool that evaluates counties on a comparable basis across a set of weighted factors, including fatal, injury, and property damage crashes; alcohol-related crashes; crashes involving drivers aged 15 to 24; crashes involving drivers aged 65 and older; speeding-related crashes; motorcycle crashes; population; and vehicle miles traveled. Once funding recommendations are finalized, they are submitted to the Commissioner of TDOSHS, who serves as the Tennessee Governor's Representative for Highway Safety.

Each funded project is assigned a THSO program manager who monitors subgrantee activity, reviews claims, conducts at least one on-site or virtual monitoring visit per year, reviews quarterly reports, and provides technical assistance and feedback throughout the grant year. This oversight structure ensures that projects stay aligned with their approved scope and that subgrantees have the support they need to achieve meaningful safety outcomes.

# LIST OF DATA SOURCES


AARP, American Occupational Therapy Association, & AAA. (n.d.). CarFit: An educational program for older drivers. https://www.car-fit.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2023). Motor vehicle safety: Teen drivers. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. https://www.cdc.gov/transportationsafety/teen_drivers/index.html

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS). (2018). Cost of injury data [Data set]. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. https://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/index.html

Gershon, P., Zhu, C., Klauer, S. G., Dingus, T., & Simons-Morton, B. (2017). Teens' distracted driving behavior: Prevalence and predictors. Journal of Safety Research, 63, 9–15. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsr.2017.08.005

Governors Highway Safety Association. (2023). America's rural roads: Beautiful and deadly. Funded by State Farm. https://www.ghsa.org/resource-hub/americas-rural-roads-beautiful-and-deadly

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. (2023). Countermeasures that work: A highway safety countermeasure guide for state highway safety offices, 11th edition (Report No. DOT HS 813 490). U.S. Department of Transportation. https://www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.gov/files/2023-12/countermeasures-that-work-11th-2023-tag_0.pdf

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. (2024). Young driver data: Drivers age 15–20 fatality statistics. U.S. Department of Transportation. https://cdan.nhtsa.gov

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. (2025, June). Traffic safety facts: Speeding, 2023 data (Report No. DOT HS 813 721). U.S. Department of Transportation. https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813721

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. (2025). Traffic safety facts: Motorcycles, 2024 data. U.S. Department of Transportation. https://cdan.nhtsa.gov

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. (2026). Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) query tool (Version 10.1.1) [Data set]. U.S. Department of Transportation. Report generated June 4, 2026. https://cdan.nhtsa.gov

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. (2026). State Traffic Safety Information (STSI) [Data set]. U.S. Department of Transportation. Accessed May 5, 2026. https://cdan.nhtsa.gov/stsi.htm#

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. (n.d.). NHTSA communications calendar. U.S. Department of Transportation. https://www.nhtsa.gov/campaign/communications-calendar

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. (n.d.). NHTSA older driver safety strategic plan. U.S. Department of Transportation. https://www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/older-drivers

Shaaban, K., Muley, D., & Mohammed, A. (2020). Analysis of illegal pedestrian crossing behavior on a major divided arterial road. Archives of Transport, 40(4). https://doi.org/10.5604/01.3001.0014.4751

Stavrinos, D., Jones, J. L., Garner, A. A., Griffin, R., Franklin, C. A., Ball, D., Welburn, S. C., Ball, K. K., Sisiopiku, V. P., & Fine, P. R. (2013). Impact of distracted driving on safety and traffic flow. Accident Analysis & Prevention, 61, 63–70. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aap.2013.08.004

Tennessee Bureau of Investigation. (2024). Crime in Tennessee 2024. https://www.tbi.tn.gov/crime-statistics/crime-in-tennessee

Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. (2023). Substance abuse treatment and recovery services data, FY 2018–2022 [Data report]. https://www.tn.gov/behavioral-health.html

Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security. (2025). Tennessee Highway Safety Office: Mission, programs, and staff. TNTrafficSafety.org. https://www.tntrafficsafety.org

Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security, TITAN Business Unit. (2026).

Tennessee Integrated Traffic Analysis Network (TITAN): Fatal and serious injury crash data [Data set]. Accessed May 5, 2026.

Tennessee Department of Transportation. (2025). Tennessee Strategic Highway Safety Plan, 2025–2029. https://www.tn.gov/tdot/safety/shsp.html

Tennessee Highway Safety Office. (2026). CorePM_Forecasting [Internal performance measure forecasting workbook]. Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security.

Title 23, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 1300. (2023). Uniform procedures for state highway safety grant programs. Electronic Code of Federal Regulations. https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-23/chapter-III/part-1300

Venkatraman, V., Richard, C. M., Magee, K., & Johnson, M. (2021). Motorcycle helmet use and head and facial injuries: Crash outcomes in CODES-linked data (Report No. DOT HS 813 051). National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. https://www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.dot.gov/files/documents/812-988-motorcyclehelmetusecodes.pdf

Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles. (n.d.). Older driver program: Referral outcomes research. https://www.dmv.virginia.gov/drivers/#older_drivers.asp

# DESCRIPTION OF OUTCOMES

Tennessee's highway safety program is guided by a shared commitment to reducing the number of lives lost and serious injuries sustained on the state's roadways. That commitment is anchored in two complementary frameworks that shape how the THSO and its partners approach planning, investment, and evaluation.

The first is the Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) vision, a national initiative born from collaboration among safety professionals across agencies and disciplines. TZD holds that no level of roadway fatality is acceptable and that a surface transportation network free of deaths and serious injuries is an achievable goal through sustained, data-driven effort. Tennessee has embraced this vision as the foundation for its highway safety work, pursuing strategies that are continuously refined, implemented, and evaluated against measurable outcomes.

The second is the Safe System Approach, which FHWA identifies as the most effective framework for achieving zero deaths. The Safe System Approach is built on six core principles: that deaths and serious injuries are unacceptable; that humans make mistakes; that humans are vulnerable; that responsibility for safety is shared; that safety must be proactive; and that redundancy across the system is essential. Rather than placing the full burden of safety on individual road users, the Safe System Approach distributes responsibility across the people, vehicles, speeds, and infrastructure that make up the transportation network.

Tennessee's Strategic Highway Safety Plan 2025-2029, developed by TDOT in partnership with TDOSHS, FHWA, and a broad coalition of safety stakeholders, serves as the state's comprehensive roadmap for putting these principles into practice. The 3HSP is developed in alignment with the SHSP, ensuring that federally funded highway safety investments directly support the state's broader goals across all four Es: engineering, education, enforcement, and emergency response.

# PERFORMANCE REPORT

The following report reflects the Tennessee Highway Safety Office's progress toward the performance targets established in the FFY 2024—2026 Triennial Highway Safety Plan. Each measure is reported against its original target and baseline, with current data drawn from the Tennessee Integrated Traffic Analysis Network (TITAN), maintained by the Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security, and the TDOSHS public-facing crash dashboard where applicable. Because the federal grant year runs through September 30, 2026, all measures are currently in progress and will be evaluated against their December 31, 2026 targets at the close of the plan period. Data reflected in this report is current as of June 8, 2026, unless otherwise noted.

### C.1 Number of Traffic Fatalities

The THSO will strive to meet the target measure for the number of traffic fatalities, set on a five-year rolling average baseline of 1,148.8 (2017—2021), with a target of 1,148.7 by December 31, 2026. The most recent completed year reflects a full-year total of 1,060 traffic fatalities in 2025, a meaningful decline from prior years. As of June 8, 2026, Tennessee has recorded 380 traffic fatalities (TDOSHS, TITAN Division, 2026).

I*n Progress*

### C.2 Number of Serious Injury Crashes

The THSO will strive to meet the target measure for the number of serious injury crashes, set on a five-year rolling average baseline of 5,995.2 (2018—2022), with a target of 5,995.1 by December 31, 2026. As of June 8, 2026, Tennessee has recorded 1,898 serious injury crashes (TDOSHS, TITAN Division, 2026).

I*n Progress*

### C.3 Number of Fatalities per VMT

The THSO will strive to meet the target measure for the number of fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled, set on a five-year rolling average baseline of 1.418 (2018--2022), with a target of 1.417 by December 31, 2026. As of 2025, Tennessee's preliminary fatality rate stands at 1.385 fatalities per 100 million VMT (TDOSHS, TITAN Division, 2026).

I*n Progress*

### C.4 Number of Unrestrained Passenger Vehicle Occupant Fatalities

The THSO will strive to meet the target measure for the number of unrestrained passenger vehicle occupant fatalities. The FFY 2024—2026 3HSP set a target of 448 by December 31, 2026. As of June 8, 2026, Tennessee has seen 246 unrestrained passenger vehicle occupant fatalities (TDOSHS, TITAN Division, 2026).

I*n Progress*

### C.5 Number of Fatalities in Crashes Involving a Driver or Motorcycle Operator with a BAC of .08 and Above

The THSO will strive to meet the target measure for the number of fatalities in crashes involving a driver or motorcycle operator with a BAC of .08 and above. The FFY 2024—2026 3HSP set a target of 277, an 11.5 percent decrease from a 2022 baseline of 313, by December 31, 2026. As of June 8, 2026, Tennessee has recorded 54 fatalities in crashes involving a drinking driver (TDOSHS, TITAN Division, 2026).

I*n Progress*

### C.6 Number of Speeding-Related Fatalities

The THSO will strive to meet the target measure for the number of speeding-related fatalities. The FFY 2024—2026 3HSP set a target of 169, a 16.75 percent decrease from a 2022 baseline of 203, by December 31, 2026. As of June 8, 2026, Tennessee has recorded 46 speeding-related fatalities (TDOSHS, TITAN Division, 2026).

I*n Progress*

### C.7 Number of Motorcyclist Fatalities

The THSO will strive to meet the target measure for the number of motorcyclist fatalities. The FFY 2024—2026 3HSP set a target of 147, a 13.5 percent decrease from a 2022 baseline of 170, by December 31, 2026. As of June 8, 2026, Tennessee has recorded 63 motorcyclist fatalities (TDOSHS, TITAN Division, 2026).

I*n Progress*

### C.8 Number of Unhelmeted Motorcyclist Fatalities

The THSO will strive to meet the target measure for the number of unhelmeted motorcyclist fatalities. The FFY 2024--2026 3HSP set a target of six, a 40 percent decrease from a 2022 baseline of ten, by December 31, 2026. As of July 16, 2026, Tennessee has recorded five unhelmeted motorcyclist fatalities (TDOSHS, TITAN Division, 2026).

I*n Progress*

### C.9 Number of Drivers Aged 20 or Younger Involved in Fatal Crashes

The THSO will strive to meet the target measure for the number of drivers aged 20 or younger involved in fatal crashes. The FFY 2024—2026 3HSP set a target of 144, an 11.6 percent decrease from a 2022 baseline of 163, by December 31, 2026. As of June 8, 2026, Tennessee has recorded 34 fatal crashes involving a driver aged 20 or younger (TDOSHS, TITAN Division, 2026).

I*n Progress*

### C.10 Number of Pedestrian Fatalities

The THSO will strive to meet the target measure for the number of pedestrian fatalities. The FFY 2024—2026 3HSP set a target of 206, a decrease from a 2022 baseline of 210, by December 31, 2026. As of June 8, 2026, Tennessee has recorded 55 pedestrian fatalities (TDOSHS, TITAN Division, 2026).

I*n Progress*

### C.11 Number of Bicyclist Fatalities

The THSO will strive to meet the target measure for the number of bicyclist fatalities. The FFY 2024—2026 3HSP set a target of 10, a 28.6 percent decrease from a 2022 baseline of 14, by December 31, 2026. As of June 8, 2026, Tennessee has recorded 7 bicyclist fatalities (TDOSHS, TITAN Division, 2026).

I*n Progress*

### B.1 Observed Seat Belt Use for Passenger Vehicles, Front Seat Outboard Occupants

The THSO will strive to meet the target measure for the observed seat belt usage rate for passenger vehicle front seat outboard occupants. The FFY 2024—2026 3HSP set a target of 90.53 percent by December 31, 2026, an increase from a 2022 baseline of 90.49 percent. The THSO, through its grant agreement with the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, has conducted the annual observational survey. Preliminary results indicate an observed usage rate above 90 percent. The observational lead is currently working to certify the results from the survey.

I*n Progress*

### P.1 Number of Distracted Driving Fatalities

The THSO will strive to meet the target measure for the number of distracted driving fatalities. The FFY 2024--2026 3HSP set a target of 60, an 11.7 percent decrease from a 2022 baseline of 68, by December 31, 2026. As of June 16, 2026, Tennessee has recorded ten distracted driving fatalities (TDOSHS, TITAN Division, 2026).

I*n Progress*

### P.2 Number of Unique Visitors on TNTrafficSafety.org

The THSO will strive to meet the target measure for the number of unique visitors on TNTrafficSafety.org. The FFY 2024--2026 3HSP set a target of 153,000 unique visitors by December 31, 2026, a 0.02 percent increase from a baseline of 150,376. As of June 7, 2026, TNTrafficSafety.org has recorded 125,134 unique visitors (TNTrafficSafety.org, 2026).

I*n Progress*

### P.3 Number of Crashes Involving a "Move Over Law" Violation

The THSO will strive to meet the target measure for the number of crashes involving a "Move Over Law" violation. The FFY 2024--2026 3HSP set a target of 145, a decrease from a 2022 baseline of 149, by December 31, 2026. As of July 16, 2026, Tennessee has recorded 104 crashes involving a "Move Over Law" violation (TDOSHS, TITAN Division, 2026).

I*n Progress*

### P.4 Number of Older Driver Involved Fatalities

The THSO will strive to meet the target measure for the number of older driver involved fatalities. The FFY 2024—2026 3HSP set a target of 279, a decrease from a 2022 baseline of 283, by December 31, 2026. As of June 8, 2026, Tennessee has recorded 105 older driver involved fatalities (TDOSHS, TITAN Division, 2026).

I*n Progress*

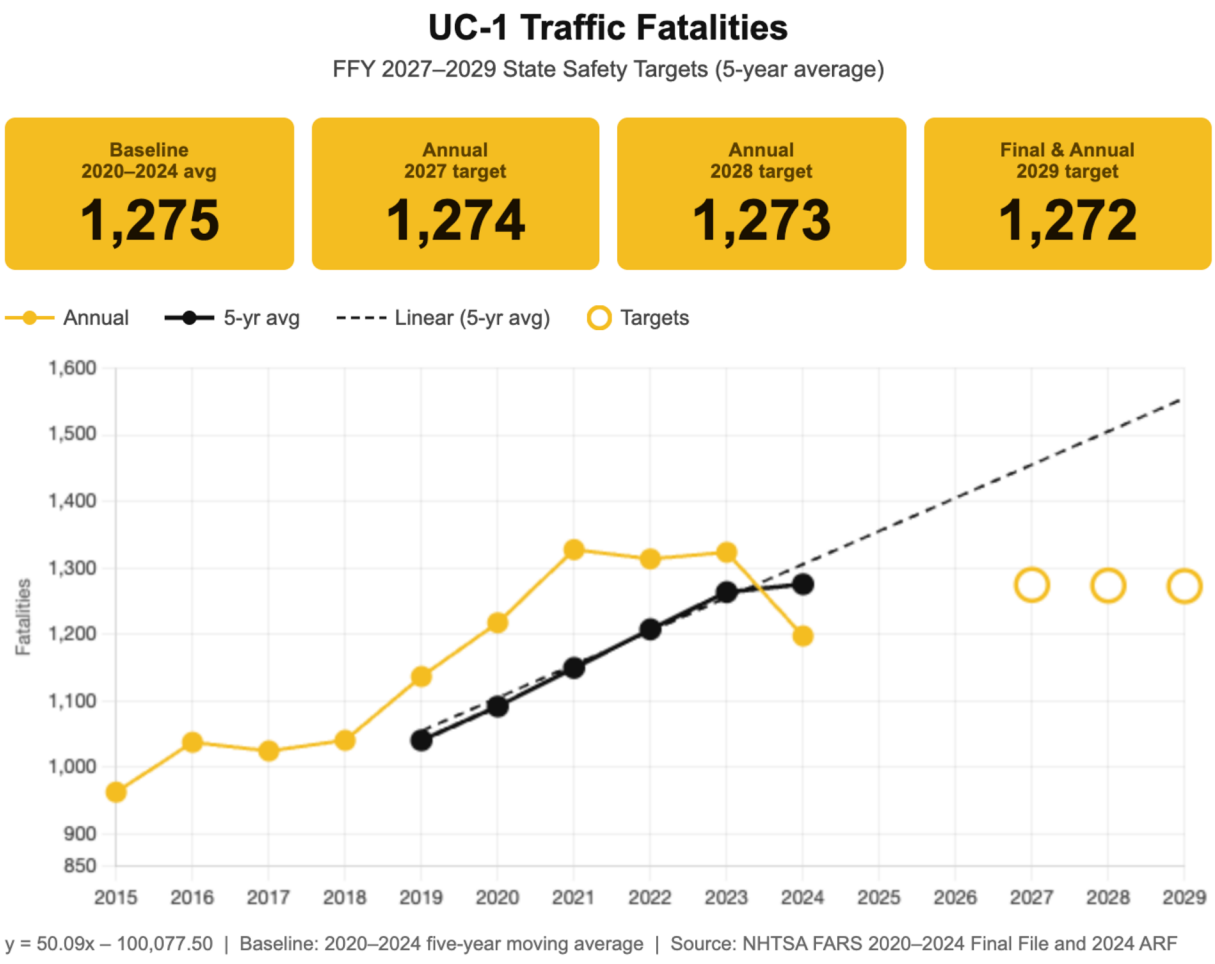


# PERFORMANCE TARGETS

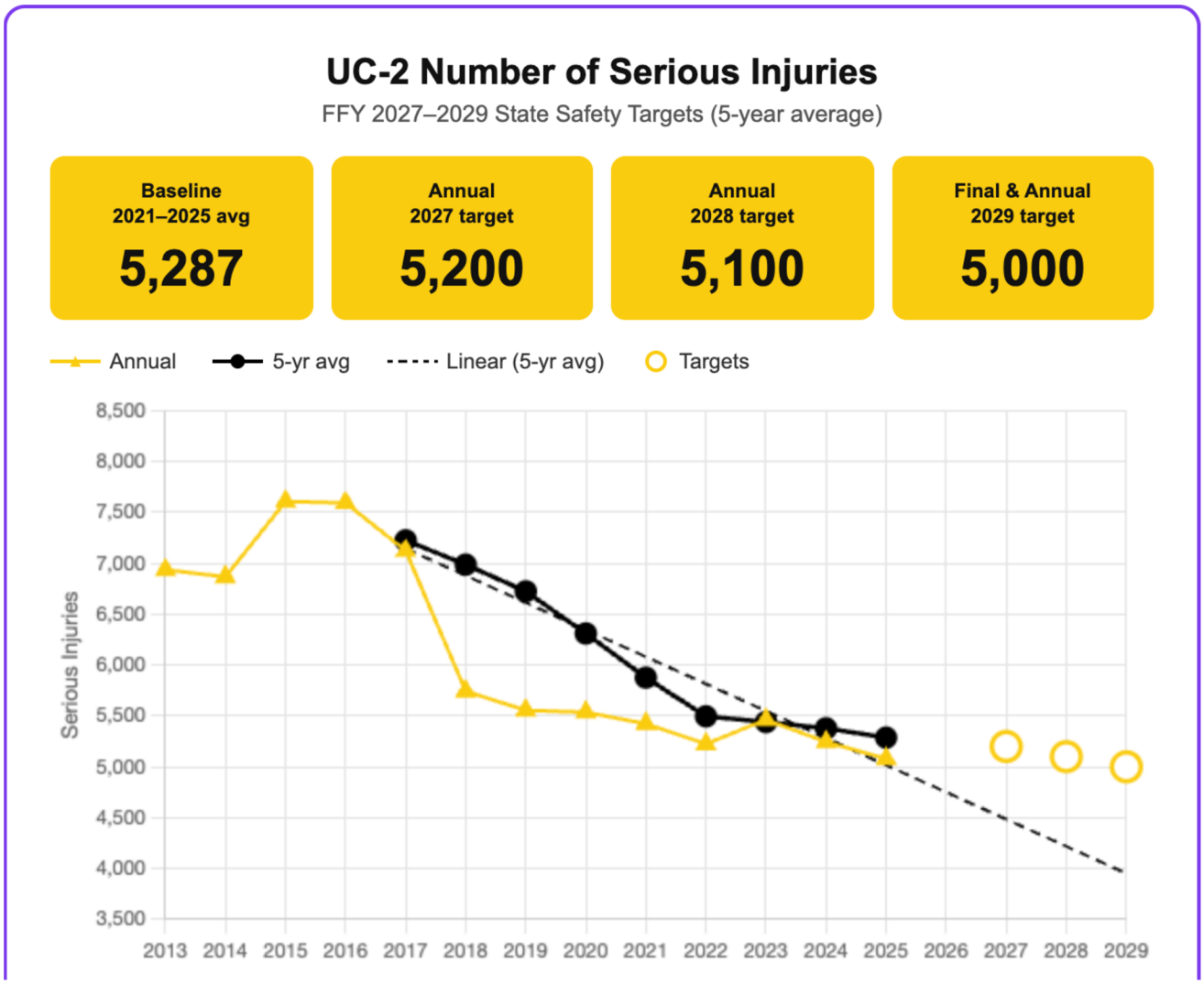
Tennessee's performance targets for FFY 2027—2029 are grounded in data and set with purpose. Every number in this plan represents a life — and the Tennessee Highway Safety Office's unwavering goal remains zero fatalities and zero serious injuries on Tennessee roadways. At the same time, meaningful progress requires measurable, evidence-based milestones that reflect where the data point and what sustained investment across behavioral safety programs can realistically achieve.

Targets in this plan were established using a five-year moving average of FARS fatality data from 2020—2024, with a linear regression applied to identify the directional trend and project attainable annual reductions through the plan period. This methodology provides a statistically grounded baseline while accounting for the year-to-year volatility that characterizes Tennessee's fatality data, including the peak years of 2021 and 2023, the promising decline observed in 2024, and the increasing trends present in several emphasis areas. External factors considered in target-setting include the complexity of Tennessee's road user population across urban, suburban, and rural communities; the state's continued population growth and the corresponding increase in vehicle miles traveled; ongoing Safe System infrastructure investments; and the programs, enforcement strategies, and community engagement efforts funded through this plan.

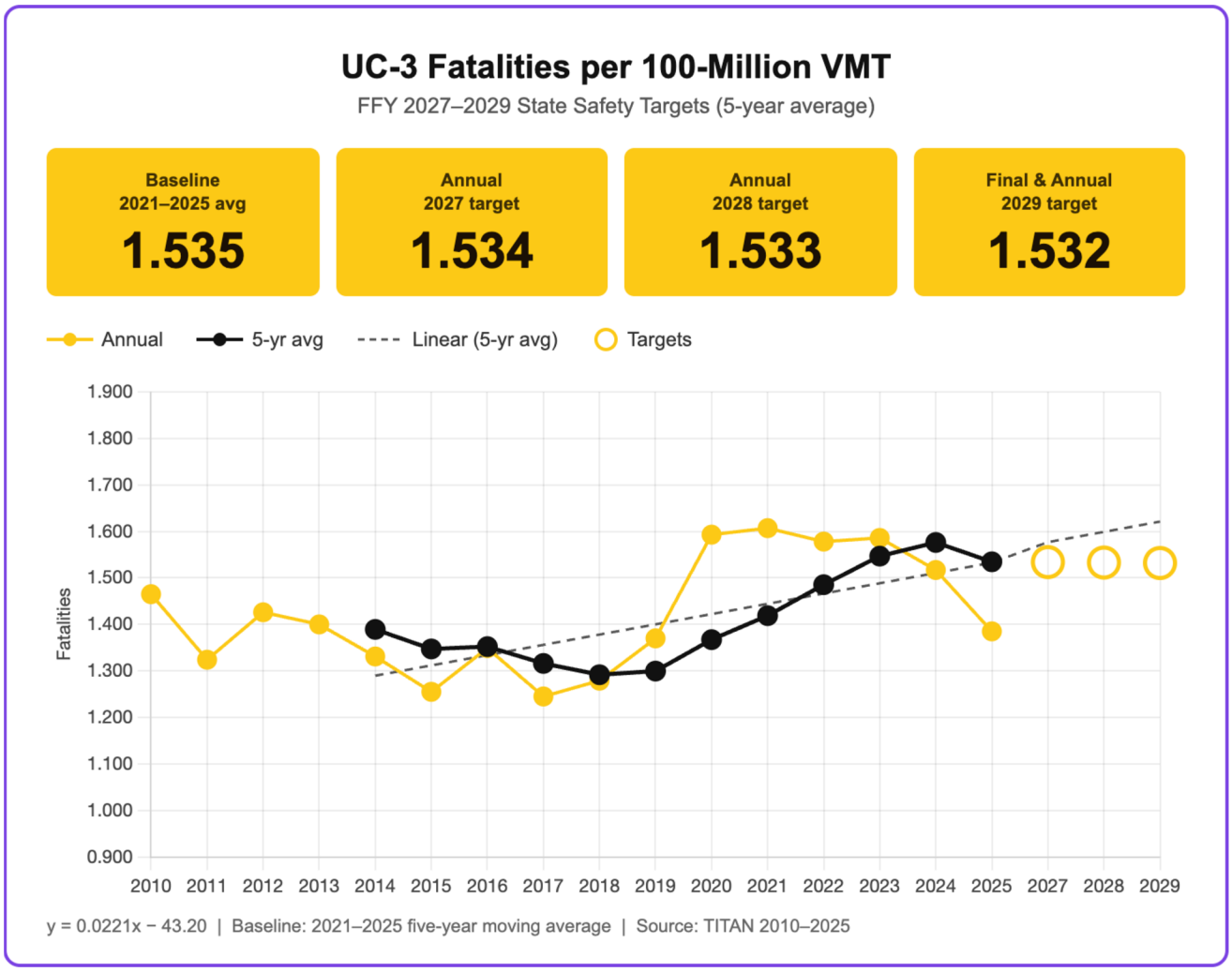
These targets are not a ceiling. They are a floor — the minimum improvement the State commits to pursue. Progress will be monitored annually, and program investments will be adjusted as needed to keep Tennessee on a trajectory toward the only finish line that matters.




While alternate baseline and linear trend analyses indicate an increasing trend in traffic fatalities, it is the intent of the Tennessee Highway Safety Office to work against this trend and achieve a decrease in the five-year moving average number of traffic fatalities from 1,275.4 (2020—2024) to 1,272 by December 31, 2029. This decrease will be accomplished, in part, through increased funding to highway safety provided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, as well as expanded partnerships developed through the public participation and engagement process. Efforts will include education, grant-funded enforcement activities, and advertising aligned with the integrated communications plan.




It is the intent of the Tennessee Highway Safety Office to continue the downward trend in the number of serious injuries and achieve a decrease in the five-year moving average from a baseline of 5,287 (2021--2025) to 5,000 by December 31, 2029. Serious injuries on Tennessee roadways have declined significantly from their peak in the 2015--2016 period, and the THSO is committed to sustaining and building on that progress. Targets have been set conservatively to reflect the more measured pace of decline observed in recent years. This reduction will be accomplished, in part, through increased funding to highway safety provided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, as well as expanded partnerships developed through the public participation and engagement process. Efforts will include education, grant-funded enforcement activities, and advertising aligned with the integrated communications plan.

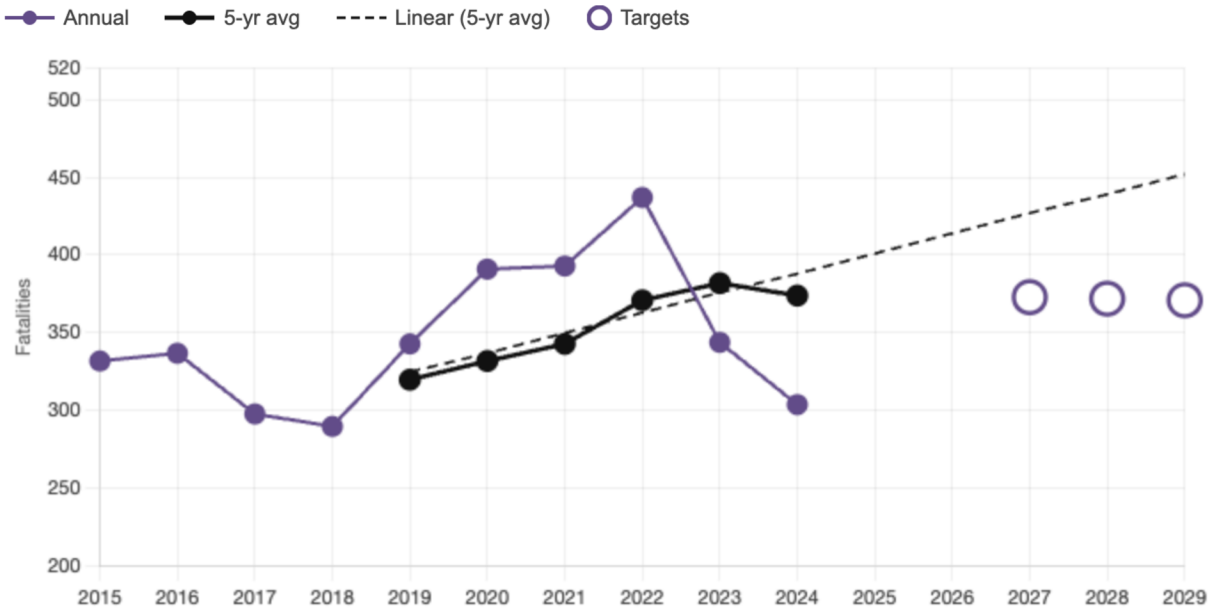



While alternate baseline and linear trend analyses indicate an increasing trend in fatalities per 100-million vehicle miles traveled, it is the intent of the Tennessee Highway Safety Office to work against this trend and achieve a decrease in the five-year moving average fatality rate from 1.535 (2021--2025) to 1.532 by December 31, 2029. This decrease will be accomplished, in part, through increased funding to highway safety provided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, as well as expanded partnerships developed through the public participation and engagement process. Efforts will include education, grant-funded enforcement activities, and advertising aligned with the integrated communications plan.

## UC-4 Unrestrained Passenger Vehicle Occupant Fatalities

FFY 2027–2029 State Safety Targets (5-year average)

| Baseline 2020–2024 avg | Annual 2027 target | Annual 2028 target | Final & Annual 2029 target |
|---|---|---|---|
| 374 | 373 | 372 | 371 |



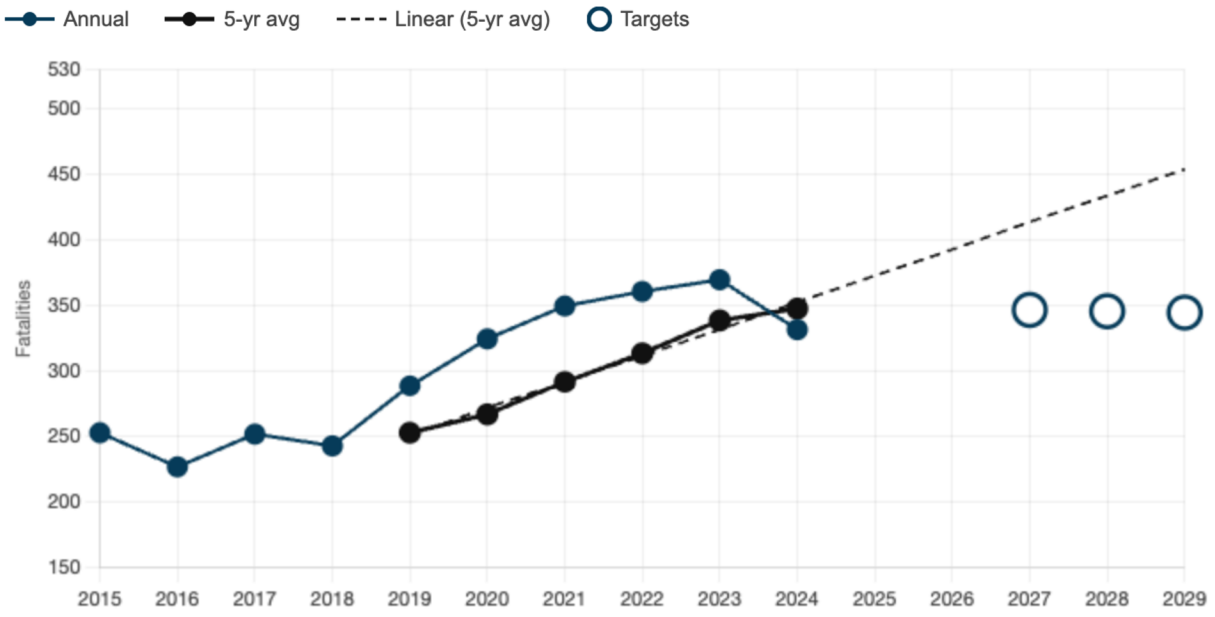

y = 12.75x – 25,417.74 | Baseline: 2020–2024 five-year moving average | Source: NHTSA FARS 2020–2024 Final File and 2024 ARF

While alternate baseline and linear trend analyses indicate an increasing trend in unrestrained passenger vehicle occupant fatalities, it is the intent of the Tennessee Highway Safety Office to work against this trend and achieve a decrease in the five-year moving average number of unrestrained passenger vehicle occupant fatalities, all seat positions, from 373.8 (2020—2024) to 371 by December 31, 2029. This decrease will be accomplished, in part, through increased funding to highway safety provided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, expanded partnerships developed through the public participation and engagement process, and sustained occupant protection education and enforcement efforts aligned with the integrated communications plan.

## UC-5 Fatalities Involving a Driver or Motorcycle Operator with a BAC at or Above the Legal Limit

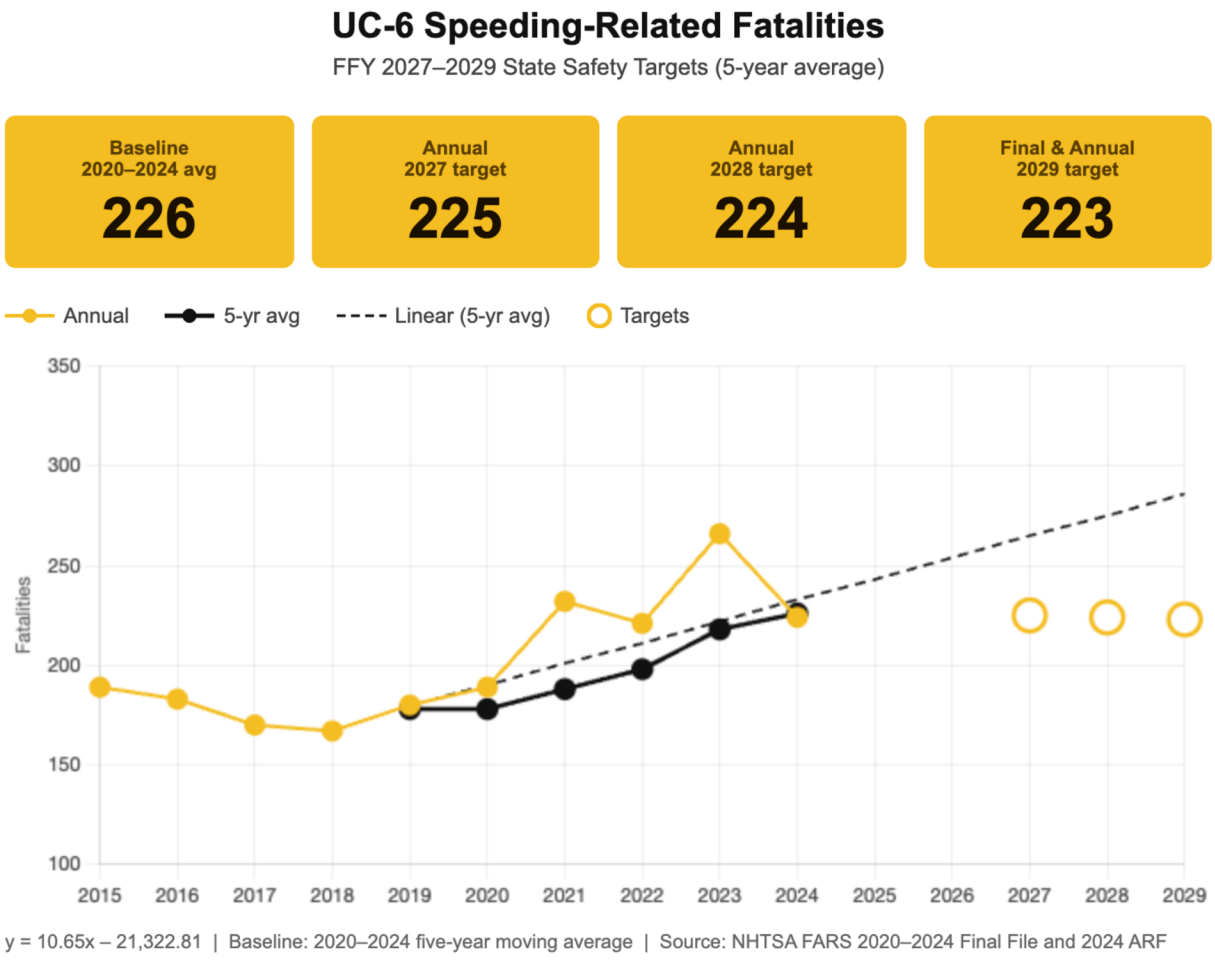
FFY 2027–2029 State Safety Targets (5-year average)

| Baseline 2020–2024 avg | Annual 2027 target | Annual 2028 target | Final & Annual 2029 target |
|---|---|---|---|
| 348 | 347 | 346 | 345 |

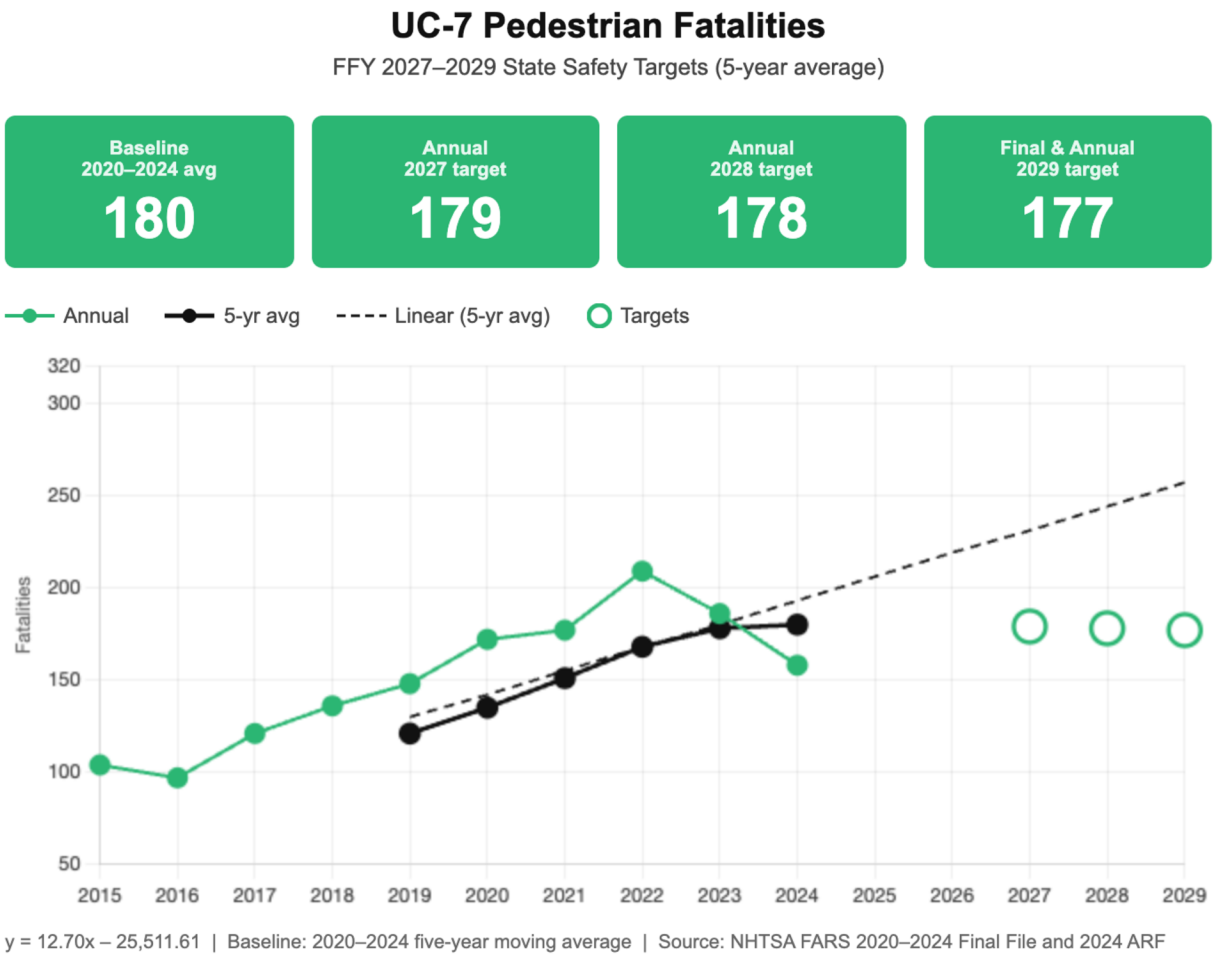



y = 20.32x – 40,774.88 | Baseline: 2020–2024 five-year moving average | Source: NHTSA FARS 2020–2024 Final File and 2024 ARF

While alternate baseline and linear trend analyses indicate an increasing trend in fatalities involving a driver or motorcycle operator with a BAC at or above the state's legal limit, it is the intent of the Tennessee Highway Safety Office to work against this trend and achieve a decrease in the five-year moving average number of alcohol-impaired driving fatalities from 347.6 (2020—2024) to 345 by December 31, 2029. This decrease will be accomplished, in part, through increased funding to highway safety provided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, expanded partnerships developed through the public participation and engagement process, and sustained impaired driving education, enforcement, and adjudication efforts aligned with the integrated communications plan.




While alternate baseline and linear trend analyses indicate an increasing trend in speeding-related fatalities, it is the intent of the Tennessee Highway Safety Office to work against this trend and achieve a decrease in the five-year moving average number of speeding-related fatalities from 226.4 (2020—2024) to 223 by December 31, 2029. This decrease will be accomplished, in part, through increased funding to highway safety provided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, expanded partnerships developed through the public participation and engagement process, and sustained speeding-related education and enforcement efforts aligned with the integrated communications plan.

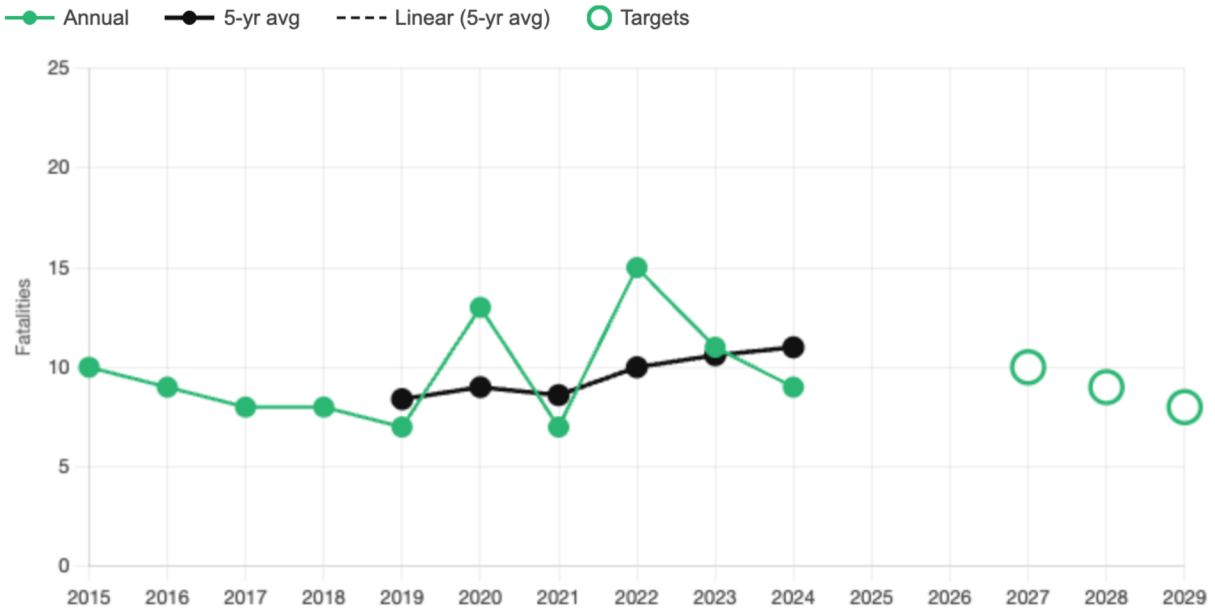



While alternate baseline and linear trend analyses indicate an increasing trend in pedestrian fatalities, it is the intent of the Tennessee Highway Safety Office to work against this trend and achieve a decrease in the five-year moving average number of pedestrian fatalities from 180.4 (2020–2024) to 177 by December 31, 2029. This decrease will be accomplished, in part, through increased funding to highway safety provided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, expanded partnerships developed through the public participation and engagement process, and sustained non-motorist education and enforcement efforts aligned with the integrated communications plan.

## SC-1 Bicyclist and Other Cyclist Fatalities

FFY 2027–2029 State Safety Targets (5-year average)

| Baseline 2020–2024 avg | Annual 2027 target | Annual 2028 target | Final & Annual 2029 target |
|---|---|---|---|
| 11 | 10 | 9 | 8 |



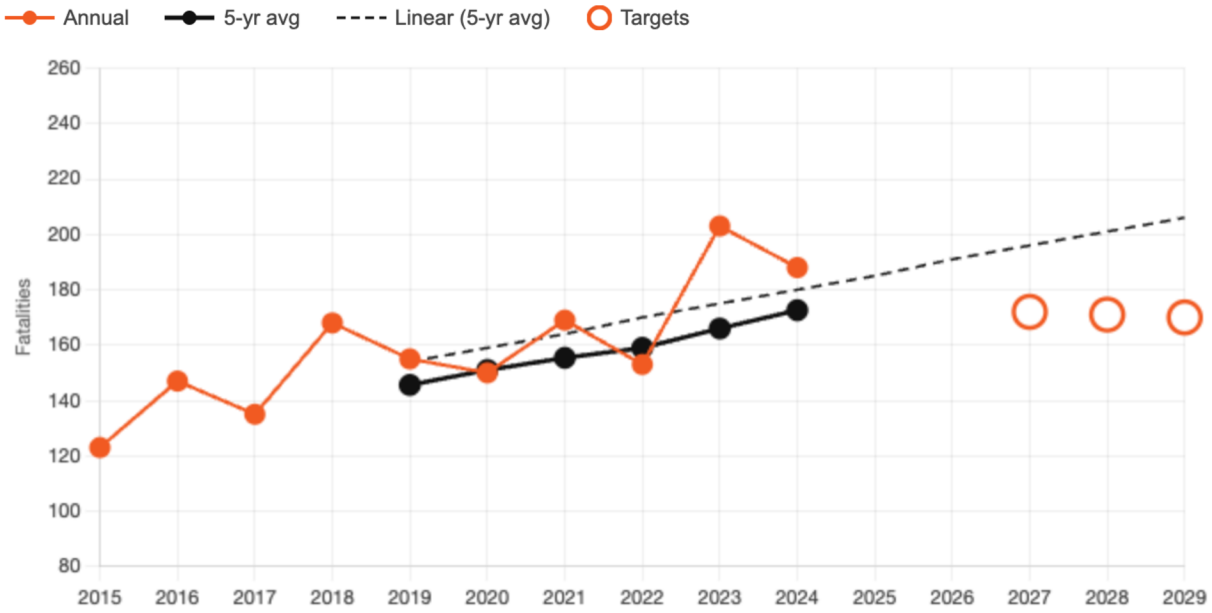

y = 0.55x – 1,099.34 | Baseline: 2020–2024 five-year moving average | Source: NHTSA FARS 2020–2024 Final File and 2024 ARF

While alternate baseline and linear trend analyses indicate an increasing trend in bicyclist and other cyclist fatalities, it is the intent of the Tennessee Highway Safety Office to work against this trend and achieve a decrease in the five-year moving average number of bicyclist and other cyclist fatalities from 11.0 (2020—2024) to 8 by December 31, 2029. This decrease will be accomplished, in part, through increased funding to highway safety provided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, expanded partnerships developed through the public participation and engagement process, and sustained non-motorist education and enforcement efforts aligned with the integrated communications plan.

## SC-2 Motorcyclist Fatalities

FFY 2027–2029 State Safety Targets (5-year average)

| Baseline 2020–2024 avg | Annual 2027 target | Annual 2028 target | Final & Annual 2029 target |
|---|---|---|---|
| 173 | 172 | 171 | 170 |



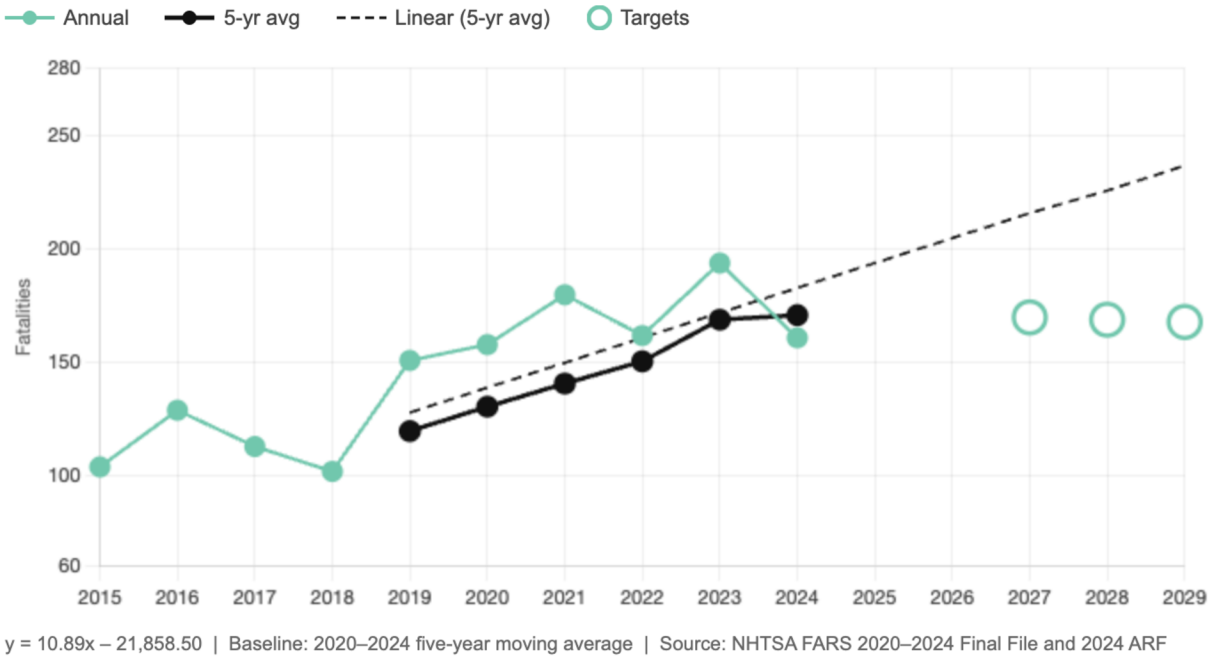

y = 5.25x – 10,445.94 | Baseline: 2020–2024 five-year moving average | Source: NHTSA FARS 2020–2024 Final File and 2024 ARF

While alternate baseline and linear trend analyses indicate an increasing trend in motorcyclist fatalities, it is the intent of the Tennessee Highway Safety Office to work against this trend and achieve a decrease in the five-year moving average number of motorcyclist fatalities from 172.6 (2020—2024) to 170 by December 31, 2029. This decrease will be accomplished, in part, through increased funding to highway safety provided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, expanded partnerships developed through the public participation and engagement process, and sustained motorcycle safety education and awareness efforts aligned with the integrated communications plan.

## SC-3 Drivers Aged 20 or Younger Involved in Fatal Crashes

FFY 2027–2029 State Safety Targets (5-year average)

| Baseline 2020–2024 avg | Annual 2027 target | Annual 2028 target | Final & Annual 2029 target |
|---|---|---|---|
| 171 | 170 | 169 | 168 |



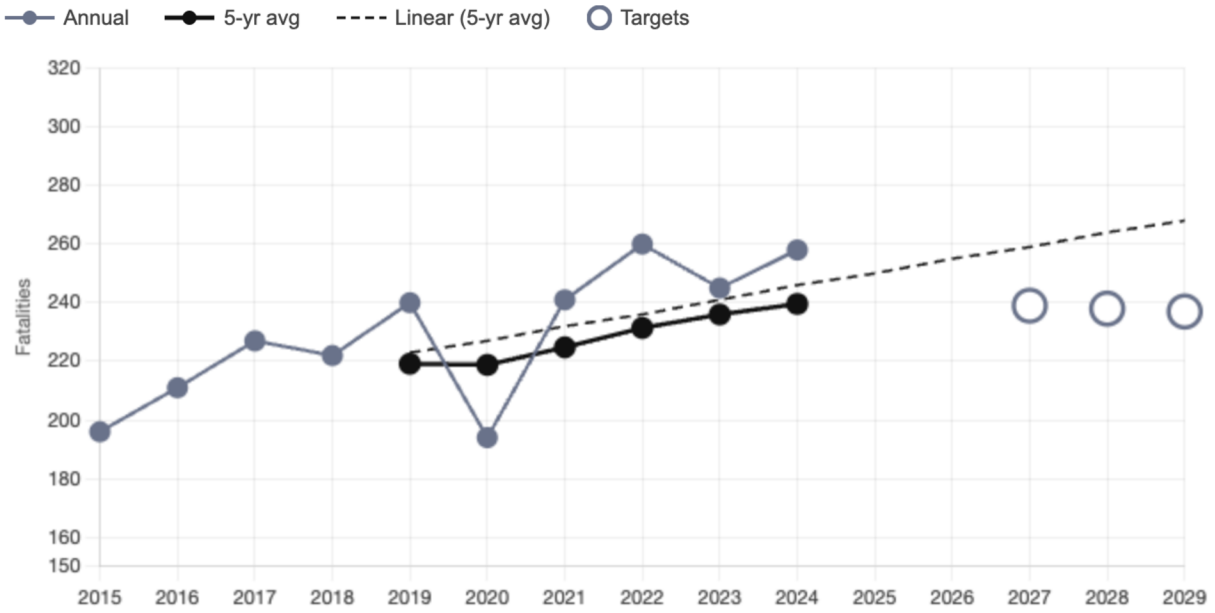

y = 10.89x – 21,858.50 | Baseline: 2020–2024 five-year moving average | Source: NHTSA FARS 2020–2024 Final File and 2024 ARF

While alternate baseline and linear trend analyses indicate an increasing trend in fatal crashes involving drivers aged 20 or younger, it is the intent of the Tennessee Highway Safety Office to work against this trend and achieve a decrease in the five-year moving average number of drivers aged 20 or younger involved in fatal crashes from 171.0 (2020–2024) to 168 by December 31, 2029. This decrease will be accomplished, in part, through increased funding to highway safety provided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, expanded partnerships developed through the public participation and engagement process, and sustained young driver education and enforcement efforts aligned with the integrated communications plan.

## SC-4 Drivers Aged 65 and Older Involved in Fatal Crashes

FFY 2027–2029 State Safety Targets (5-year average)

| Baseline 2020–2024 avg | Annual 2027 target | Annual 2028 target | Final & Annual 2029 target |
|---|---|---|---|
| 240 | 239 | 238 | 237 |



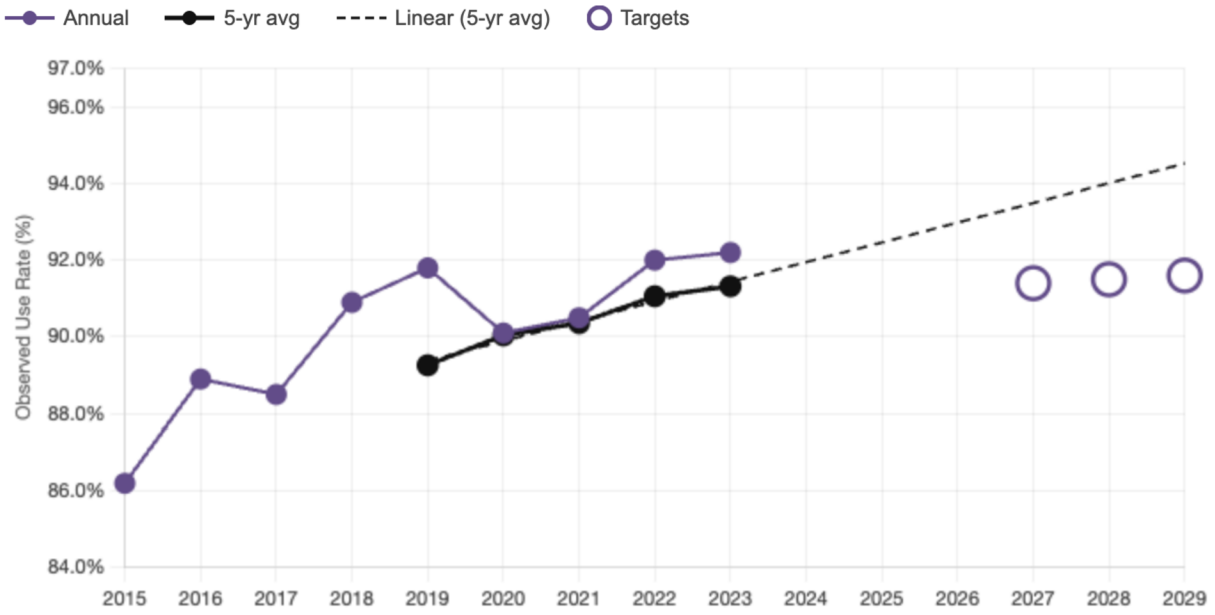

y = 4.58x – 9,024.39 | Baseline: 2020–2024 five-year moving average | Source: NHTSA FARS Query Tool (2026)

While alternate baseline and linear trend analyses indicate an increasing trend in fatal crashes involving drivers aged 65 and older, it is the intent of the Tennessee Highway Safety Office to work against this trend and achieve a decrease in the five-year moving average number of drivers aged 65 and older involved in fatal crashes from 239.6 (2020–2024) to 237 by December 31, 2029. This decrease will be accomplished, in part, through increased funding to highway safety provided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, expanded partnerships developed through the public participation and engagement process, and sustained older driver education and law enforcement engagement efforts aligned with the integrated communications plan.

## SC-5 Rate of Seat Belt Use, Statewide

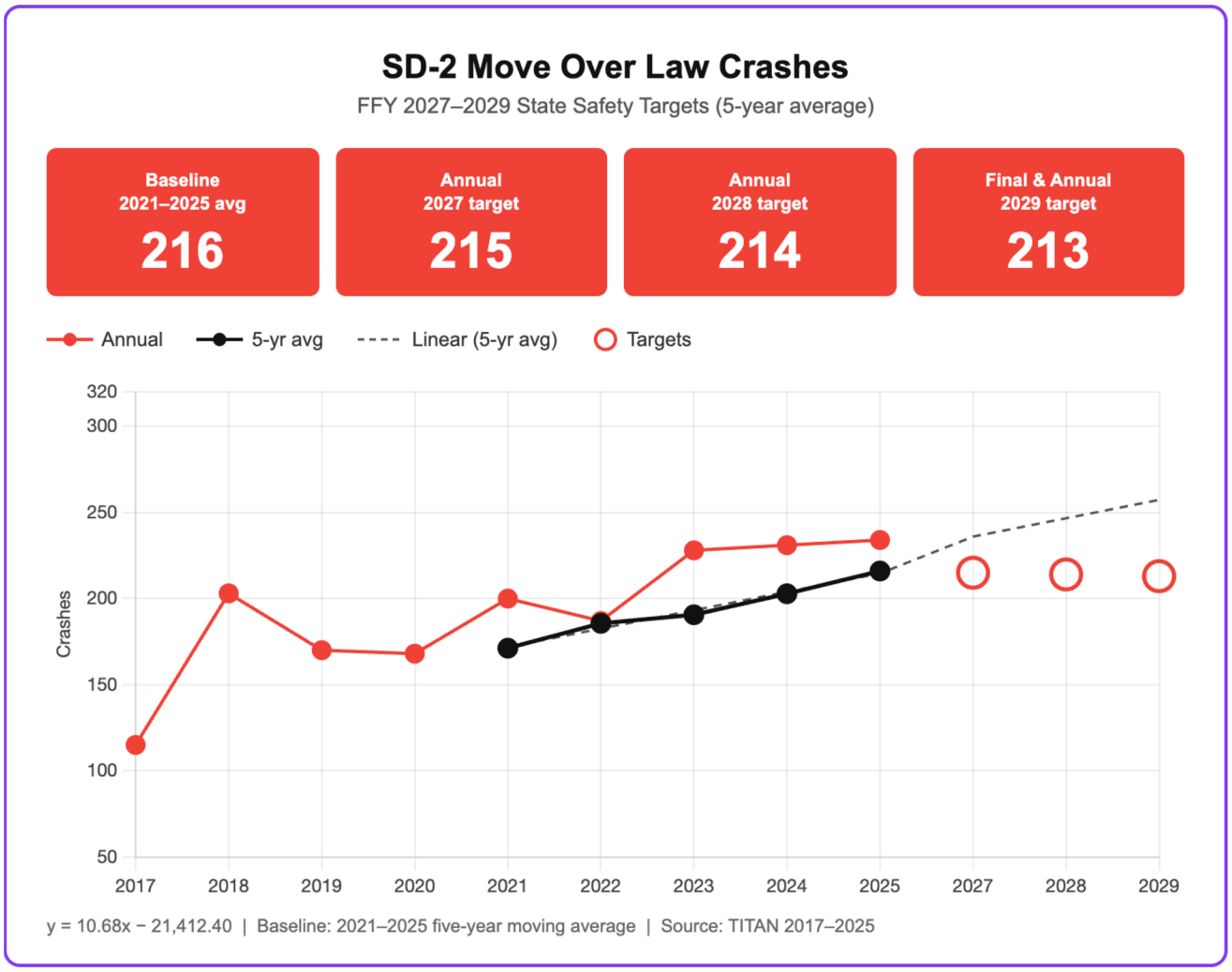
FFY 2027–2029 State Safety Targets (5-year average)

| Baseline 2019–2023 avg | Annual 2027 target | Annual 2028 target | Final & Annual 2029 target |
|---|---|---|---|
| 91.3% | 91.4% | 91.5% | 91.6% |




y = 0.51x – 948.39 | Baseline: 2019–2023 five-year moving average | Source: NHTSA FARS 2020–2023 Final File and Tennessee State Survey

Tennessee's observed seat belt use rate has shown a generally positive trend in recent years, and it is the intent of the Tennessee Highway Safety Office to build on that progress and achieve a continued increase in the five-year moving average observed seat belt use rate from 91.32 percent (2019—2023) to 91.6 percent by December 31, 2029. This increase will be accomplished, in part, through increased funding to highway safety provided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, expanded partnerships developed through the public participation and engagement process, and sustained occupant protection education and enforcement efforts aligned with the integrated communications plan.




While alternate baseline and linear trend analyses indicate an increasing trend in Move Over Law crashes, it is the intent of the Tennessee Highway Safety Office to work against this trend and achieve a decrease in the five-year moving average number of Move Over Law crashes from 216 (2021--2025) to 213 by December 31, 2029. This decrease will be accomplished, in part, through increased funding to highway safety provided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, as well as expanded partnerships developed through the public participation and engagement process. Efforts will include education, grant-funded enforcement activities, and advertising aligned with the integrated communications plan.

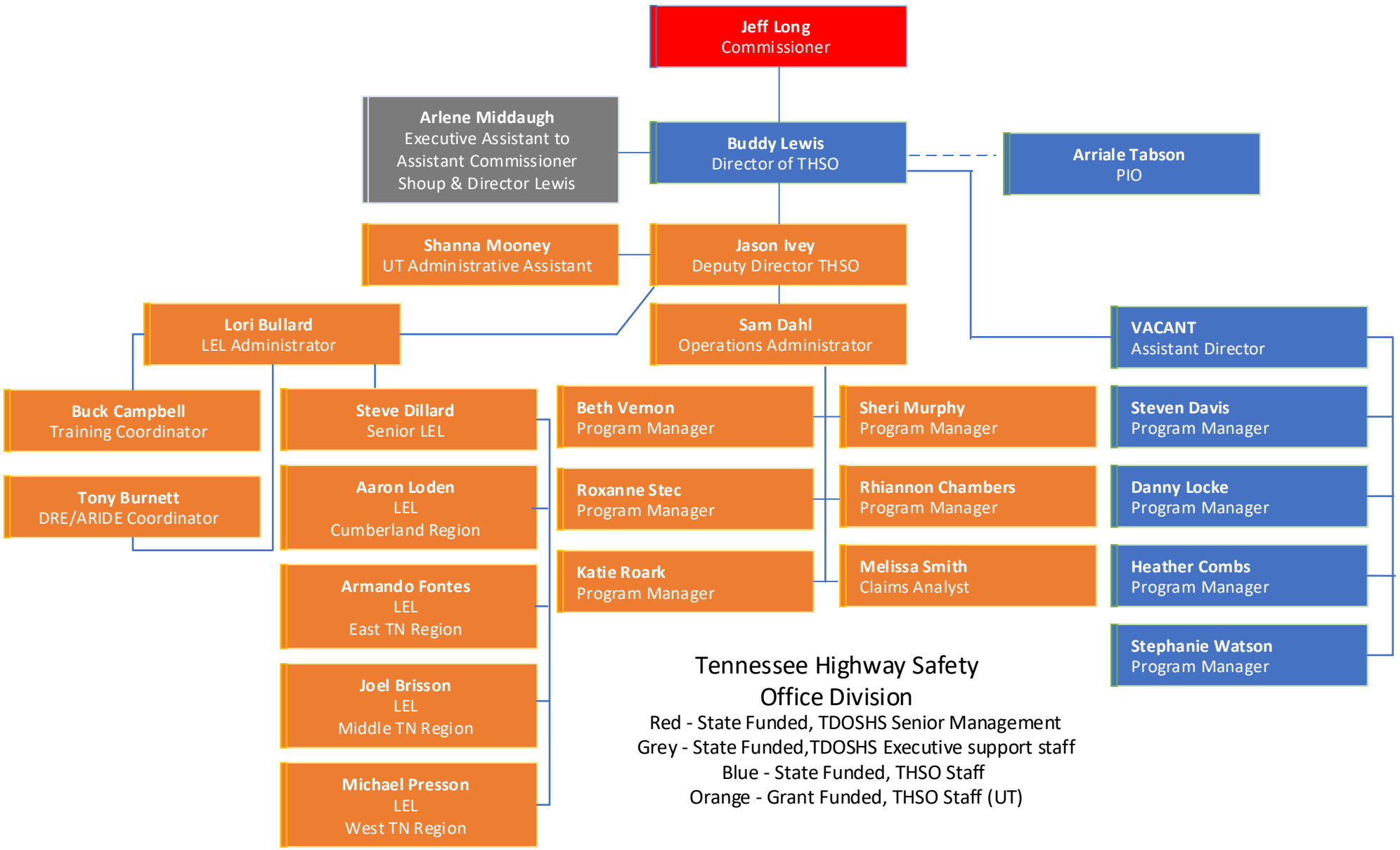
# PLANNING & ADMINISTRATION

In an effort to reduce fatalities and serious injuries on Tennessee roads, the Tennessee Highway Safety Office (THSO) administers programs focusing upon the behavioral aspects of highway safety through partnerships with law enforcement, judicial personnel, and community advocates. The THSO is a division of the Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security (TDOSHS) and works in tandem with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to implement statewide programs addressing occupant protection, impaired driving, speed enforcement, pedestrian and bicycle safety, and crash data collection and analysis. Programs administered by the THSO are 100 percent federally funded.

The objectives of the THSO are to:

- Develop and prepare the triennial Highway Safety Plan (HSP) and develop and prepare additional plans as required.
- Establish priorities for highway safety funding.
- Develop and prepare the Annual Report.
- Provide information and assistance to prospective grantees on program benefits, procedures for participation, and development plans.
- Coordinate and facilitate training and public information activities for grantees.
- Encourage and assist local political subdivisions in improving their highway safety planning and administrative efforts. Review and evaluate the implementation of state and local highway safety funds contained in the approved HSP. Coordinate the HSP with other federally and non-federally funded programs related to highway safety.
- Assess program performance through analysis of data relevant to highway safety planning.
- Utilize all available means for improving and promoting Tennessee's highway safety program.
- Complete the monitoring of contracts and grants.
- Produce annual operating budgets and develop biennial budget strategies.
- Deliver programs that effectively change the knowledge, attitude, and behavior of drivers to reduce crashes, injuries, and deaths.

A 50 percent state match is provided for state employee resources to complete the above objectives. An organizational chart by funding source of the highway safety office as of July 1, 2026, can be found below.




## Tennessee Highway Safety Office Division

Red - State Funded, TDOSHS Senior Management
Grey - State Funded,TDOSHS Executive support staff
Blue - State Funded, THSO Staff
Orange - Grant Funded, THSO Staff (UT)

> The mission of the Tennessee Highway Safety Office is to reduce Tennessee traffic fatalities as part of the nation's vision **Toward Zero Deaths.**

## Law Enforcement Liaison Program

The Law Enforcement Liaison (LEL) Program is a federally funded initiative established in 1998 by the THSO, per recommendation of NHTSA. The LEL Program serves as the primary connector between the THSO and local law enforcement agencies across the State of Tennessee, implementing national and state traffic safety priorities through media campaigns, high-visibility enforcement, and community engagement.

The LEL Program is comprised of four regionally based Law Enforcement Liaisons covering East, Cumberland, Middle, and West Tennessee. Each LEL is responsible for developing and overseeing four to five traffic safety enforcement networks within his or her designated region. Each network includes at least one full-time law enforcement officer designated as the network coordinator to organize local traffic safety events, activities, and enforcement initiatives under the LEL's leadership. LELs and respective network coordinators work closely to schedule monthly and/or quarterly planning meetings with local law enforcement agencies.

A Senior LEL provides direct supervision of the four regional LELs and reports directly to the Law Enforcement Administrator. A Statewide Training Coordinator and a Statewide Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) and Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement (ARIDE) Training Coordinator also support the program.

The THSO offers traffic safety training to law enforcement officers, other traffic safety advocates, and stakeholders. The program provides coordination for all major campaigns funded by federal, state, and local resources. Each LEL and the training coordinators carry a training responsibility related to highway safety enforcement and prevention. The program also assists grantee agencies in meeting their goals within highway safety and maintains a communication link between the agencies and program managers within the THSO.

The LEL program encourages widespread participation in national and state traffic safety campaigns. Increased traffic enforcement positively impacts driver awareness and behavior on the roads. This program administers the police traffic services program, including project development and implementation. It also develops training, coordinates special programs, and promotes law enforcement technology and resources. The LELs participate in conferences, conduct training, and involve themselves with various highway safety subcommittees such as Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety groups and Traffic Safety Task Forces. Additional responsibilities include promoting traffic enforcement strategies and related best practice policies with state and local law enforcement to strengthen the THSO's mission and make the roadways safer.

The LELs promote safe driving habits by assisting with education and outreach to older drivers through L.E.A.D.S., CarFit, Yellow Dot, and Drivers Orientation Screen for Cognitive Impairment (DOSCI) law enforcement questionnaires. They also support teen driver programs and other community-based traffic safety initiatives. The LEL Program hosts an annual State Law Enforcement Challenge to recognize excellence in Tennessee traffic safety, open to all Tennessee law enforcement agencies.

## Funding Considerations

Planning and administration funds provide the staff and resources necessary to implement and manage highway safety programs to meet the goals and objectives of the highway safety office to reduce crashes, injuries, and fatalities on Tennessee roadways. Staff identify highway safety problems using data, evaluate safety programs and activities, and provide technical assistance and training to grantees across the state. The Commissioner of the TDOSHS serves as the designated Governor's Highway Safety Representative, while the Director of the THSO fulfills the role of the state's coordinator of activity.

The THSO employs a planning and administration staff of eight full-time state employees. The THSO also employs 17 full-time positions funded by a University of Tennessee grant, providing essential program management and operational support across all highway safety program areas.

## Estimated Funding

### State of Tennessee

| Source | Funding Source ID | Eligible Use of Funds | Est. Federal Amount |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2027 | BIL Act NHTSA 402 | Planning and Administration | $500,000 |
| 2028 | BIL Act NHTSA 402 | Planning and Administration | $500,000 |
| 2029 | BIL Act NHTSA 402 | Planning and Administration | $500,000 |
| | | **Total Over Three-Years** | **$1,500,000** |

### University of Tennessee

| Source | Funding Source ID | Eligible Use of Funds | Est. Federal Amount |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2027 | 154 Transfer Funds | 154 | $600,000 |
| 2027 | BIL 405d Impaired Driving Mid | 405d Low Other Based on Problem ID (BIL) | $500,000 |
| 2027 | BIL NHTSA 402 | Police Traffic Services (BIL) | $2,300,000 |
| 2028 | 154 Transfer Funds | 154 | $600,000 |
| 2028 | BIL 405d Impaired Driving Mid | 405d Low Other Based on Problem ID (BIL) | $500,000 |
| 2028 | BIL NHTSA 402 | Police Traffic Services (BIL) | $2,300,000 |
| 2029 | 154 Transfer Funds | 154 | $600,000 |
| 2029 | BIL 405d Impaired Driving Mid | 405d Low Other Based on Problem ID (BIL) | $500,000 |
| 2029 | BIL NHTSA 402 | Police Traffic Services (BIL) | $2,300,000 |
| | | **Total Over Three-Years** | **$10,200,000** |

# PROGRAM AREA:
# POLICE TRAFFIC SERVICES

## Problem ID

According to America's Rural Roads: Beautiful and Deadly, a report from the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) funded by State Farm, nearly half of all fatal crashes in the United States occur on rural roads, though only 19 percent of the U.S. population lives in rural areas. Tennessee has 95 counties, 78 of which are considered rural by the University of Tennessee Boyd Center for Business and Economic Research.

> Nearly half of all fatal crashes in the United States occur on rural roads — yet only 19 percent of the U.S. population lives in rural areas.
>
> Tennessee has 95 counties. 78 are considered rural — making rural road safety a defining challenge for this state.

Many factors contribute to the elevated crash risk on rural roadways. Limited safety resources, simpler roadway infrastructure, poor emergency medical services, and risky driver behaviors all play a significant role. GHSA reports that nationwide, more than half of motor vehicle occupants killed in rural road crashes were unrestrained. To combat this challenge, Tennessee utilizes the "Buckle Up in Your Pickup Truck" campaign. Other behavioral issues — including impaired driving, speeding, and distraction — also contribute substantially to the high number of crashes on rural roads.

The mission of the THSO is to reduce Tennessee traffic fatalities as part of the nation's vision Toward Zero Deaths. The THSO works to achieve this goal by changing driver behavior through increased education, enforcement, and community partnerships. Enforcement is the foundation of that mission. The THSO provides statistics to law enforcement agencies across the state to assist them with allocating staffing and maximizing effectiveness. By analyzing data, agencies can identify the days, times, and

areas where most crashes occur and focus enforcement efforts accordingly. Successful use of that data can be measured by the number of critical and fatal crashes in targeted areas following enforcement campaigns. Program strategies are chosen based on countermeasures known to be effective, allowing law enforcement to be proactive rather than reactive. Activities such as sobriety checkpoints, saturation patrols, and campaign participation provide enforcement action relative to locations identified by crash and belt data.




*Source: https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/safety/documents/crash_stats//Five_Year_Historical_Report.pdf*

## Speeding

NHTSA defines a speeding-related crash as any crash in which a driver was charged with a speeding-related offense or in which a law enforcement officer indicated that racing, driving too fast for conditions, or exceeding the posted speed limit was a contributing factor. Speed affects safety even when a driver is operating at the posted limit but too fast for road conditions — during bad weather, in construction zones, or in poorly lit areas at night. Speeding endangers not only the driver but everyone else on the road, including law enforcement officers. Nationally, speeding has been involved in approximately one-third of all motor vehicle fatalities for more than two decades.

In 2023, there were 11,775 fatalities in speeding-related crashes in the United States, representing 29 percent of total traffic fatalities for the year and a decrease of 3 percent from 2022. There were an estimated 332,598 people injured — 14 percent of all traffic injuries — in speeding-related crashes that same year. Among all drivers involved in fatal crashes, motorcycle riders had the highest speeding involvement rate at 36 percent, compared to 22 percent of passenger car drivers, 15 percent of light-truck drivers, and 7 percent of large-truck drivers. Drivers 15 to 20 years old had the highest speeding involvement rate among all age groups, with 37 percent of male drivers and 18 percent of female drivers in that age group speeding at the time of a fatal crash. Speeding also compounds other high-risk behaviors — in 2023, drivers who were speeding at the time of a fatal crash had a BAC of .08 g/dL or greater at nearly twice the rate of non-speeding drivers. (NHTSA Traffic Safety Facts: Speeding, 2023 Data, DOT HS 813 721, June 2025)

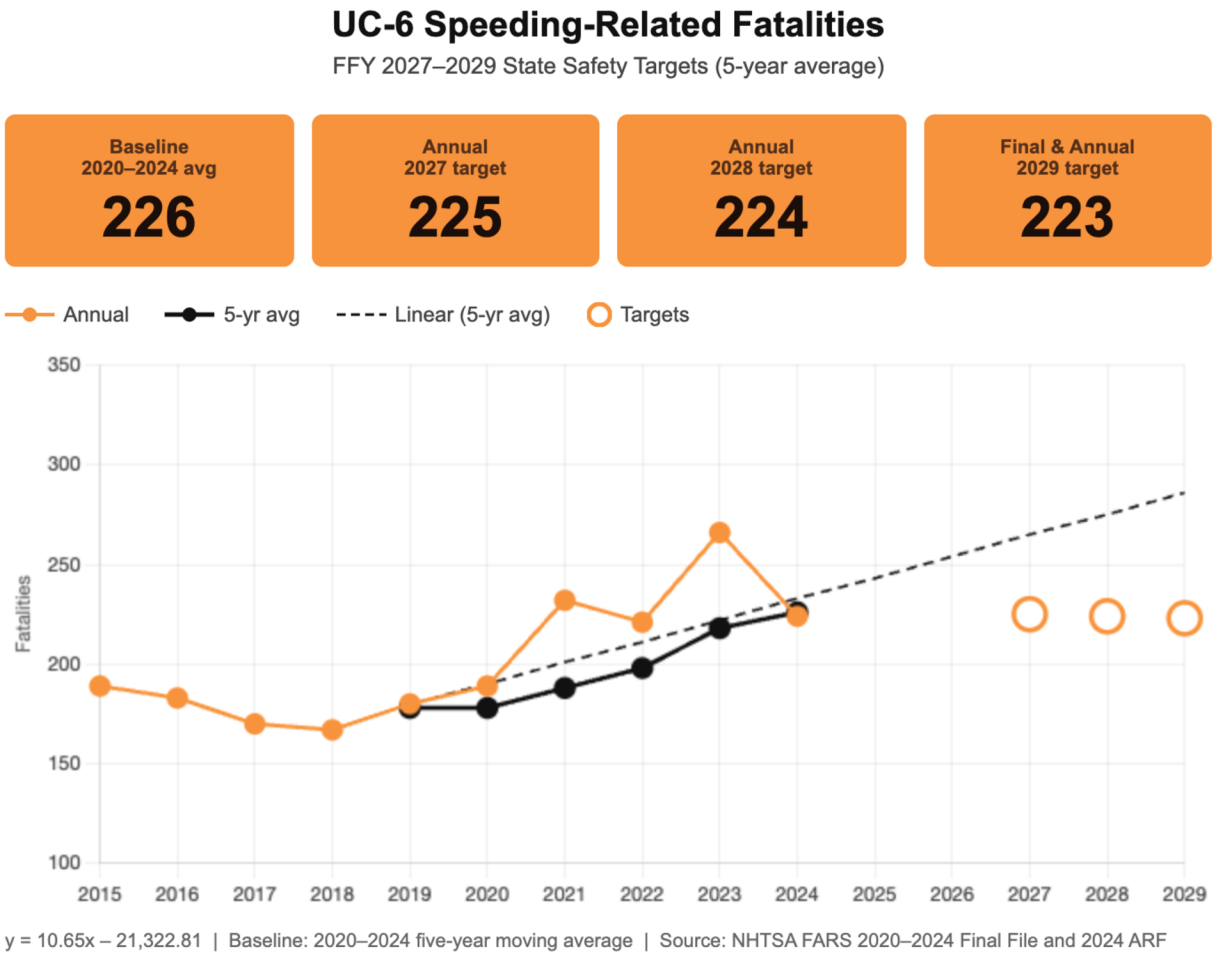
## Aggressive Driving

Aggressive drivers represent a distinct and elevated risk on Tennessee roadways. They are more likely to drink and drive, speed, or drive unbelted even outside of aggressive driving incidents. Roadway congestion is a major contributing factor to driver frustration and a common trigger for aggressive driving behaviors.

Aggressive driving is generally understood as a combination of several high-risk behaviors that, taken individually, may not constitute aggression but together create a pattern of dangerous conduct. These behaviors include disregarding traffic signs and signals, following too closely, erratic or improper passing, improper lane change signaling, disobeying red lights and flashing signals, reckless or inattentive driving, and driving with a suspended license.

Together, speeding and aggressive driving represent behaviors that are both prevalent and preventable. The THSO's police traffic services program addresses these behaviors through data-driven enforcement, high-visibility campaigns, and community engagement strategies designed to change driver behavior across Tennessee.

# Performance Target




While alternate baseline and linear trend analyses indicate an increasing trend in speeding-related fatalities, it is the intent of the Tennessee Highway Safety Office to work against this trend and achieve a decrease in the five-year moving average number of speeding-related fatalities from 226.4 (2020—2024) to 223 by December 31, 2029. This decrease will be accomplished, in part, through increased funding to highway safety provided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, expanded partnerships developed through the public participation and engagement process, and sustained speeding-related education and enforcement efforts aligned with the integrated communications plan.

# Countermeasure Strategies

The following countermeasure strategies have been selected in accordance with 23 CFR Part 1300.11(b)(4), which requires each State to describe the countermeasure strategies that will guide program implementation and annual project selection in order to achieve the performance targets identified in this plan.

Each strategy presented below addresses a specific problem identified during the planning process and includes a description of the link between that problem and the selected countermeasure. Where applicable, countermeasures rated three or more stars in Countermeasures That Work, 11th Edition (NHTSA, 2023), recommended in a NHTSA-facilitated program assessment, or included in the Uniform Guidelines for State Highway Safety Programs are cited accordingly. For any countermeasure that falls outside those categories, supporting justification is provided to demonstrate the effectiveness of the proposed strategy.

All strategies described herein are grounded in Tennessee's current data, aligned with identified program area needs, and defensible under the federal requirements of 23 CFR Part 1300.

## Countermeasure: Police Traffic Services Enforcement

### Project Safety Impact

Countermeasures That Work, 11th Edition (2023) recognizes High-Visibility Enforcement as an effective strategy across multiple program areas, establishing a strong evidentiary foundation for the police traffic services approach. Police traffic services grants support comprehensive, community-based programs that address the full spectrum of unsafe driving behaviors — from impaired driving and speeding to occupant protection and distracted driving. These programs achieve meaningful and lasting reductions in fatal and serious injury crashes by combining targeted enforcement with public education, community engagement, and data-driven resource allocation.

Police traffic services include the enforcement of traffic laws and training in traffic enforcement skills. They also involve crash and injury prevention activities — including leadership and community outreach to encourage seat belt use, child safety seat use, helmet use, and the use of other protective gear — and support community-based efforts to address impaired driving, occupant protection, speed violations, distracted driving, aggressive driving, and other unsafe driving behaviors.

## Countermeasure: Police Traffic Services Enforcement *(cont.)*

High-Visibility Enforcement should be conducted in locations chosen based on data. Enforcement should be positioned in areas easily visible to the motoring public, in locations with demonstrated enforcement needs based on crash or crime history. Using geo-mapping to identify hot spots — areas with high incidences of crashes and traffic violations — helps target locations where law enforcement presence can both deter criminal activity and reduce crashes.

Placing enforcement in high-volume traffic areas increases the likelihood that drivers witness officers making stops, creating general deterrence and encouraging voluntary compliance with traffic laws. HVE combines law enforcement presence, visibility elements, and a coordinated publicity strategy to educate the public and promote compliance. Checkpoints, saturation patrols, roving patrols, and wave enforcement are all strategies used to achieve these outcomes.

Enforcement activities can include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Saturation Patrols — Increased officers conducting enforcement in a targeted area to gain voluntary compliance with traffic laws and create general deterrence. Enforcement must be visible to the motoring public; the deterrence effect depends on drivers witnessing active traffic stops.
- DUI Checkpoints — Checkpoints increase the perceived risk of detection and arrest, creating a general deterrence effect that discourages impaired driving before it begins. The visibility of checkpoint operations reinforces that message broadly, beyond those drivers who are directly stopped.
- Wave Enforcement — Increased enforcement of a specific traffic violation in a targeted location for a defined, recurring period of time. Wave enforcement is coordinated with specialized campaigns such as Booze It and Lose It and NHTSA's Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over.
- Multi-Jurisdictional Enforcement — By combining agencies across jurisdictions, multi-jurisdictional operations create a broader law enforcement presence and increase the perceived risk of being stopped. These operations must be highly visible and supported by equal attention to both enforcement and publicity.

To strengthen state safety initiatives at the local level and build community support, the Law Enforcement Liaisons in Tennessee have established 19 law enforcement networks across the state. These networks are comprised of law enforcement officers from agencies in groups of adjacent counties who hold regular meetings to discuss safety initiatives, share data, and coordinate responses to local traffic safety challenges.

# Countermeasure: Police Traffic Services Enforcement *(cont.)*

## Linkage to Program Area

The police traffic services program directly supports community-based efforts to address impaired driving, occupant protection, work zone safety, speed violations, distracted driving, aggressive driving, motorcycle safety, and other unsafe driving behaviors. HVE is a departure from traditional reactive enforcement. Rather than responding to crashes after they occur, HVE positions law enforcement proactively in data-identified locations, making the enforcement visible and publicizing it broadly to create general deterrence across the driving population.

HVE combines visible, proactive law enforcement tactics — saturation patrols, checkpoints, wave enforcement, and multi-jurisdictional operations — with visibility elements such as roadside signage, marked vehicles, and mobile command posts, and a coordinated publicity strategy using press releases, social media, and community outreach. Together, these components educate the public about the consequences of unsafe driving and increase the perceived risk of enforcement contact, promoting voluntary compliance with Tennessee's traffic safety laws.

The law enforcement network program plays an essential role in translating statewide safety initiatives into local action. Network meetings train area law enforcement officials to implement THSO programs effectively and build the cooperation and communication among neighboring communities that makes multi-jurisdictional efforts possible.

## Rationale

Targeted traffic law enforcement, when implemented with visibility and broad public communication, has a well-established record of reducing fatalities and serious injuries on Tennessee roadways. Countermeasures That Work, 11th Edition (2023) identifies High-Visibility Enforcement as an effective strategy across multiple program areas. Tennessee utilizes the following CTW 11th Edition countermeasures through its police traffic services program:

Alcohol-Impaired Driving

- Publicized Sobriety Checkpoints (5 stars)
- High-Visibility Saturation Patrols (4 stars)

Seat Belts and Child Restraints

- Short-Term, High-Visibility Seat Belt Law Enforcement (5 stars)
- Nighttime, High-Visibility Seat Belt Law Enforcement (4 stars)
- Sustained Seat Belt Enforcement (3 stars)

## Countermeasure: Police Traffic Services Enforcement *(cont.)*

Speeding and Speed Management

- High-Visibility Enforcement (4 stars)

Tennessee utilizes HVE strategies throughout the grant year to sustain deterrence and reinforce the consequences of unsafe driving. The law enforcement networks continue to strengthen highway safety partnerships and encourage consistent participation in enforcement campaigns, contributing to the THSO's goal of reducing crashes, injuries, and fatalities on Tennessee roads.

### Funding Consideration

The THSO intends to fund law enforcement agencies, both local and state, to address the overall problem of fatalities and serious injury crashes on Tennessee roadways, with an emphasis on speed, aggressive driving, impaired driving, and occupant protection, as determined by agency-level data analysis.

### Estimated Budget

| FFY | Funding Source | Eligible Use of Funds | Estimated Amount |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2027 | BIL NHTSA 402 | Police Traffic Services (BIL) | $3,265,000 |
| 2028 | BIL NHTSA 402 | Police Traffic Services (BIL) | $3,265,000 |
| 2029 | BIL NHTSA 402 | Police Traffic Services (BIL) | $3,265,000 |
| | | **Total Over Three Years** | **$9,795,000** |

# Countermeasure: Communications (Media) — Speeding Prevention

## Project Safety Impact

Countermeasures That Work, 11th Edition (2023) recognizes that communications and outreach are an essential component of effective speed enforcement programs, establishing the evidentiary basis for the THSO's integrated media approach to speeding prevention. The THSO utilizes both media branches — earned and paid — as part of a communications plan aligned with the NHTSA Communications Calendar. This plan requires cohesive collaboration to reinforce Tennessee law and change driver behavior, particularly among the highest-risk demographic: Tennesseans 18 to 34 years old.

The THSO has engaged in a state interagency contractual agreement with Tennessee Technological University (TTU) to provide media buying, marketing, and advertising services in an effort to facilitate behavioral change. Services include feature design, production, purchasing, and administrative reconciliation to assist the state in informing and educating the public on traffic safety issues. The primary services encompass the purchasing and creation of audio spots (radio and streaming), television (network and cable) time, social media, digital advertising (display, pre-roll, native, and Over-the-Top Television [OTT]), cinema ads, and Out-of-Home (OOH) to deliver speeding prevention messages across Tennessee.

TTU employs a data-driven approach for media buys, utilizing statewide crash and fatality statistics to most effectively engage the target audience, thereby reducing fatalities, injuries, and associated economic losses resulting from speeding-related crashes.

The THSO's earned media efforts encompass traditional news media, digital news media, and social media. The THSO will continue to pitch traditional news outlets including local radio, television, and print newspapers, while substantially increasing digital communications and social media efforts as internet technology advances.

The THSO often collaborates with traffic safety partners and community advocates to host press events during media campaigns. Press events increase community support, personalize the enforcement message, localize the issue, and spread awareness for crash victims and their families. All THSO press events are video recorded, uploaded to YouTube, and posted to social media.

## Countermeasure: Communications (Media) — Speeding Prevention *(cont.)*

The THSO website, TNTrafficSafety.org, serves as the primary resource for THSO's digital assets, providing Tennessee traffic crash data, THSO news and information, event calendars, educational resources, and more. In advance of every month, the THSO builds a digital social media schedule based on statewide traffic data, upcoming events, platform trends, and the NHTSA calendar. Once approved by THSO management, content is scheduled through native social media platform tools. The THSO's most successful platforms are Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. Quarterly social media reports are shared with THSO management to identify which content generated the most interest and engagement, informing future campaign decisions.

### Linkage to Program Area

The speeding communications campaign is designed to function in direct coordination with enforcement activity, amplifying the deterrent effect of law enforcement through aligned paid and earned media. The "Slow Down Tennessee" campaign is deployed during months with elevated speeding-related crashes, targeting Tennesseans 18 to 34 years old through audio spots (streaming), social media, and digital advertising (display, pre-roll, YouTube, etc.). The measure for advertising outreach will be within the goals and guidelines of frequency and reach set by NHTSA for national paid media campaigns.

The THSO's earned media goal for speed reduction is to align education, awareness, and enforcement efforts during specific time periods and support paid media strategies as scheduled. The THSO works with Tennessee Technological University to update speed-related educational materials with current data, maintain the THSO's website, and prepare speed-related messaging for monthly social media calendars. The THSO will prepare "Slow Down Tennessee" press release templates for agencies conducting speed enforcement each year and may host a press event or produce a public service announcement to launch the campaign statewide. Grantee photos and public service announcements will also be shared to extend reach.

The THSO will support local Hispanic communities by inviting Hispanic media outlets to local press events and sharing available Spanish marketing materials, with plans to expand those resources as NHTSA provides additional Spanish language materials.

## Countermeasure: Communications (Media) — Speeding Prevention *(cont.)*

### Rationale

Targeted communications that inform the public of enforcement activity and reinforce the consequences of speeding are an integral part of effective speed management programs. Countermeasures That Work, 11th Edition (2023) establishes that effective communications and outreach are essential to the success of High-Visibility Enforcement — the 4-star countermeasure anchoring Tennessee's speed enforcement strategy. Key objectives of these communications are to inform the public about enforcement activity, build community support for traffic safety efforts, and increase the perceived risk of enforcement contact to promote voluntary compliance.

The THSO's communications strategy is specifically structured to support and reinforce enforcement, with the "Slow Down Tennessee" campaign timed to enforcement waves and aligned with the NHTSA Communications Calendar. Paid and earned media work in tandem to ensure that enforcement efforts are widely known and that the message of speed reduction reaches the target audience before, during, and after enforcement periods. This integrated approach reflects the intent of the HVE communications model as described in Countermeasures That Work, 11th Edition.

### Funding Consideration

The THSO plans to provide paid educational public service announcements with the message of reducing speeding in an effort to change social norms among high-risk demographics, through a number of paid media contracts and a grant agreement through Tennessee Technological University. The intent is also to provide earned media opportunities with messaging to increase education and awareness about speeding in local communities across Tennessee.

### Estimated Budget

| FFY | Funding Source | Eligible Use of Funds | Estimated Amount |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2027 | BIL NHTSA 402 | Paid Advertising | $600,000 |
| 2028 | BIL NHTSA 402 | Paid Advertising | $600,000 |
| 2029 | BIL NHTSA 402 | Paid Advertising | $600,000 |
| | | **Total Over Three Years** | **$1,800,000** |

# PROGRAM AREA:
# OCCUPANT PROTECTION

## Problem ID

Occupant protection begins with securing all vehicle occupants, at all times, while a vehicle is in motion. The Occupant Protection program in Tennessee is focused on educating the public, law enforcement, family medical providers, childcare providers, public health educators, and families on the traffic safety laws and best practices for using occupant protection systems. Occupant protection refers to vehicle safety features designed to protect occupants in a crash. Features may be active systems, meaning the occupant must physically engage the system, or passive systems, meaning the safety feature will engage automatically without any action on the part of the occupant. For child occupant protection, the caregiver must use a child safety seat that will provide appropriate safety features for a child-sized form. Vehicle seat belt systems pose an increased risk of injury for child occupants who are not meeting the criteria for which occupant protection systems were designed.

According to 2024 NHTSA data, 48 percent of passenger vehicle occupants killed in motor vehicle crashes were unrestrained based on known restraint use, with estimates approaching 50 percent when accounting for unknown cases. In Tennessee, the THSO reports that approximately 50 percent of the state's traffic fatalities are unbelted — a figure that rises to 56 percent when examining nighttime crashes. Research has found that lap and shoulder combination safety belts, when used, reduce the risk of fatal injury to front-seat passenger car occupants by 45 percent and the risk of moderate to critical injury by 50 percent (NHTSA, 2011). NHTSA estimates that safety belts saved nearly 14,955 lives of passenger vehicle occupants aged five and older in the United States in 2017.

The data reveals clear patterns among those most at risk. In 2023, approximately 49 percent of passenger vehicle occupant fatalities were unrestrained, with rear-seat passengers consistently showing lower usage rates than front-seat occupants. Fifty-nine percent of pickup drivers killed were unrestrained, compared to 47 percent of SUV drivers and 41 percent of van drivers. Unrestrained fatalities were highest among the 13-14 and 25-34 age groups, at 61 percent each. Male fatalities were unrestrained at a notably higher rate

- 53 percent — compared to 41 percent for females. The risk is compounded after dark: in 2024, 56 percent of occupants killed between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m. were not buckled (NHTSA Traffic Safety Facts, Report No. 813730).

> Nationwide in 2024, 56 percent of occupants killed between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m. were not buckled. *(NHTSA)*

Child safety seats represent a proven and critical intervention for the state's youngest road users. When used correctly, child safety seats reduce the risk of fatal injury by 71 percent for infants under one year old and by 54 percent for toddlers ages one through four in passenger cars. In light trucks, those reductions are 58 percent and 59 percent respectively (NHTSA).

Caregivers who visit designated child passenger safety fitting stations, staffed by nationally certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians (CPSTs), receive guided, hands-on assistance to correctly install and use child safety seats according to car seat and vehicle manufacturer instructions. Data collected from these visits indicates that misuse rates remain consistently high. Since January 2026, data collection has been streamlined through the adoption of the National Digital Car Seat Check Form (NDCF) as the sole method of seat check data collection, with CPSTs documenting activity electronically through the NDCF website. Tennessee's misuse rate for 2025 climbed to 76.3 percent, up from 68 percent in 2022 and above the reported national rate of 72 percent. The most common misuses include harness fit, loose installation, and not using any child safety restraint at all. In 2025, 2,421 car seat checks were reported through the NDCF system

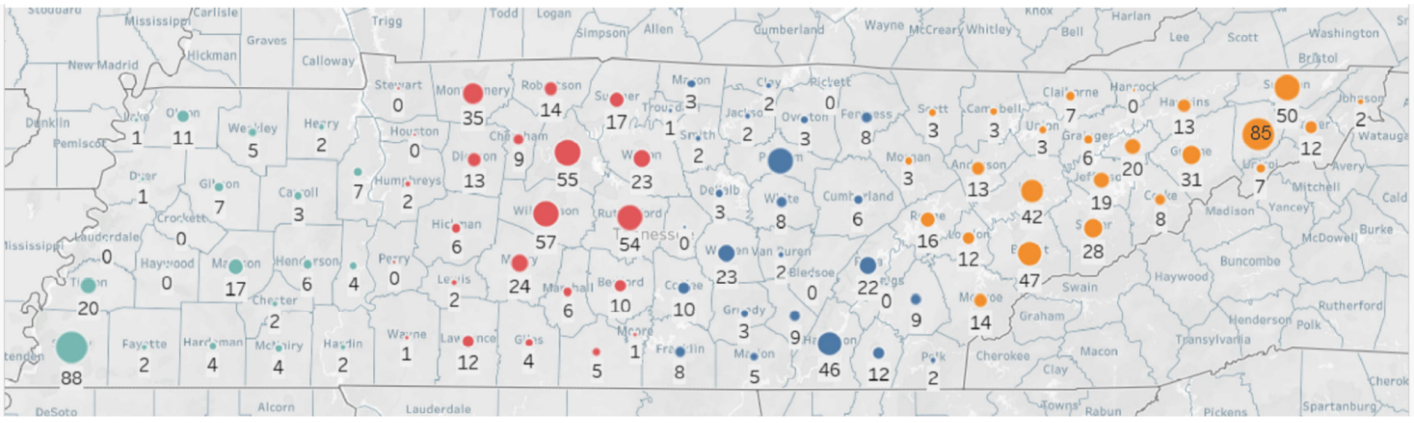
> Tennessee's misuse rate for 2025 climbed to 76.3 percent, up from 68 percent in 2022 (TNOPC)

| Any Misuse | Child Age | Unborn | Birth-1 | 1-2 | 2-3 | 3-4 | 4-6 | 6-8 | 8+ | Totals |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No | | 33.7% | 23.5% | 16.6% | 25.1% | 18.0% | 21.4% | 31.0% | 33.3% | 23.2% |
| Yes | | 66.3% | 76.5% | 83.4% | 74.9% | 82.0% | 78.6% | 69.0% | 66.7% | 76.8% |
| Totals | | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

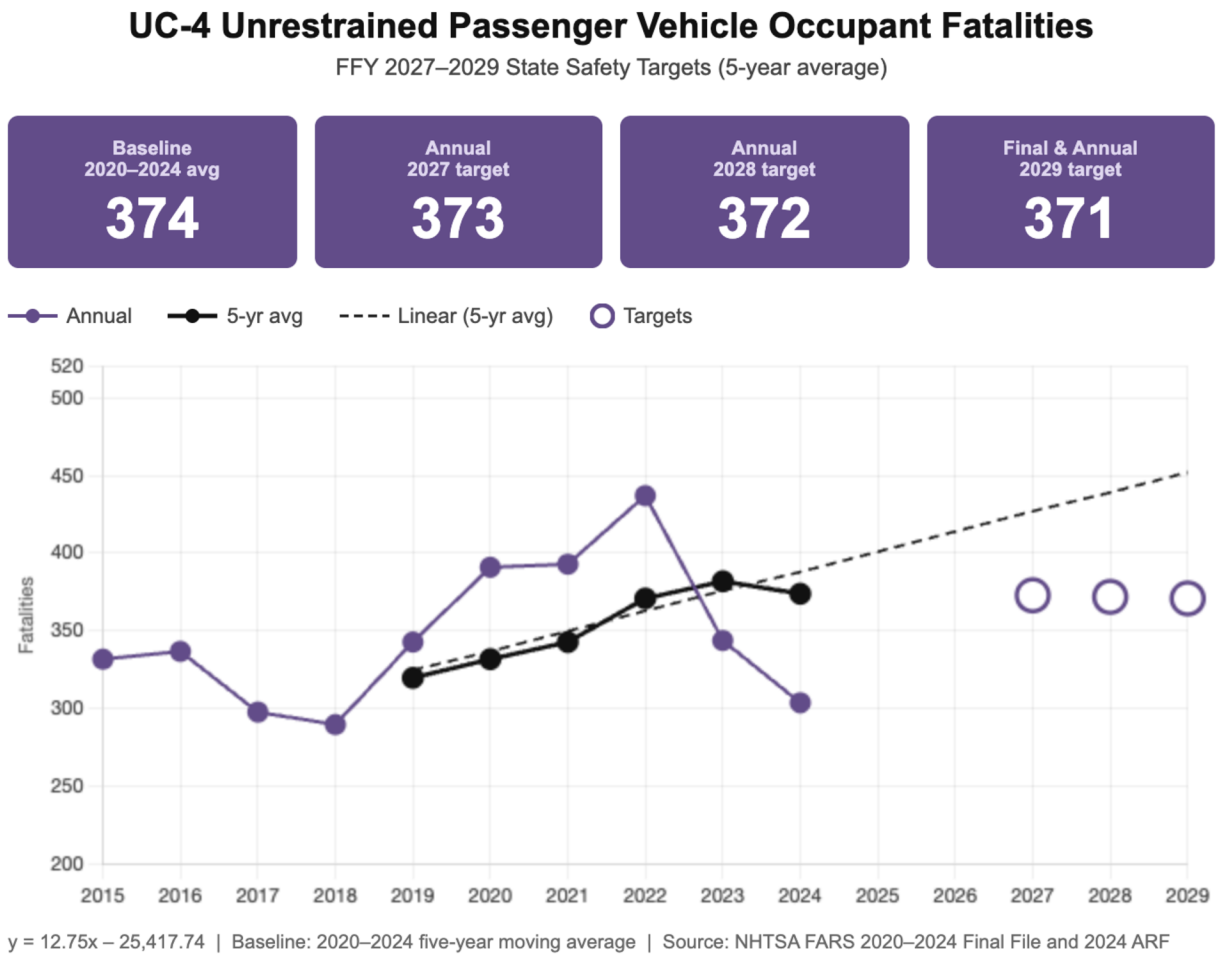
National data reinforces these findings. In 2021, AAA and the National Safety Council reported that more than half of all car seats brought in nationwide for inspection were improperly installed or being used, and one in five parents and caregivers reported seeking expert help to install a car seat or secure a child (AAA Washington, 2022). The three most common errors identified through NDCF data are loose installation, failure to use the tether on forward-facing installations, and loose harness straps on a child. This data aligns with Tennessee's experience and reinforces the continued need to promote the availability of fitting stations and inspection stations staffed by trained CPSTs for all travelers in Tennessee and those traveling through the state.

Many parents and caregivers are overconfident when it comes to correctly restraining children in a motor vehicle, which prevents them from seeking assistance from trained technicians. Awareness of misuse risks and available resources — through marketing and trusted local partners — is critical for changing behaviors and attitudes toward car seat, booster seat, and seat belt safety.

Tennessee's network of fitting station partners continues to grow. In 2026, 133 of the 186 fitting station agencies are contributing seat check data to the NDCF system, a significant increase over the 29 agencies that had been reporting through the prior system. In 2025, fitting stations and technicians reported seat check activity for over 2,400 children.



# Performance Target

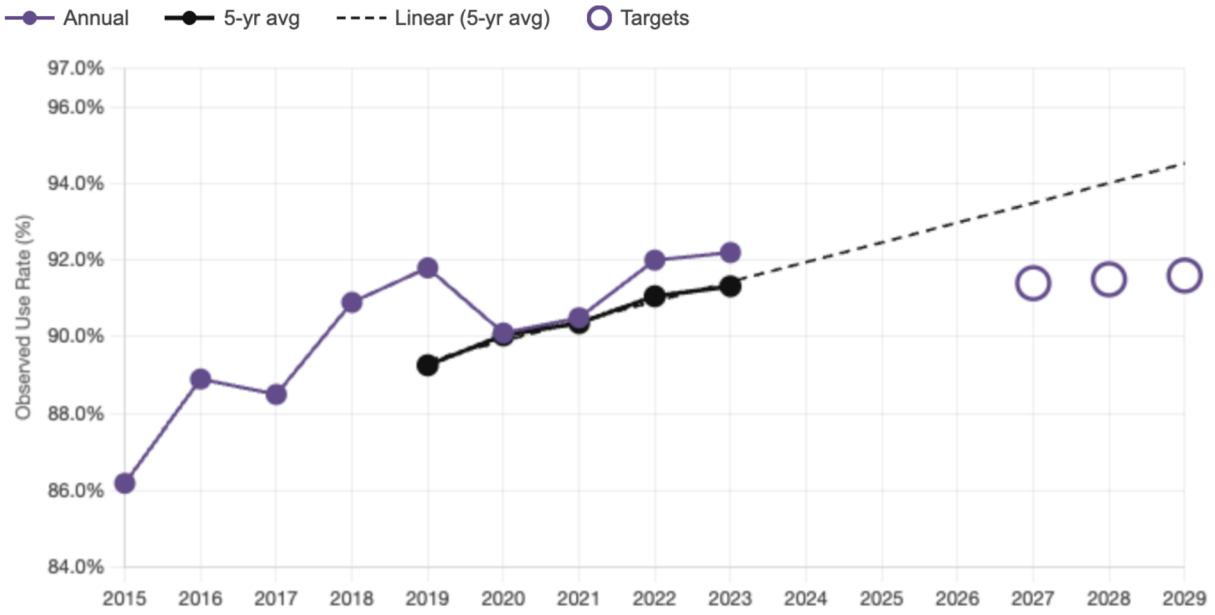



While alternate baseline and linear trend analyses indicate an increasing trend in unrestrained passenger vehicle occupant fatalities, it is the intent of the Tennessee Highway Safety Office to work against this trend and achieve a decrease in the five-year moving average number of unrestrained passenger vehicle occupant fatalities, all seat positions, from 373.8 (2020—2024) to 371 by December 31, 2029. This decrease will be accomplished, in part, through increased funding to highway safety provided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, expanded partnerships developed through the public participation and engagement process, and sustained occupant protection education and enforcement efforts aligned with the integrated communications plan.

## SC-5 Rate of Seat Belt Use, Statewide

FFY 2027–2029 State Safety Targets (5-year average)

| Baseline 2019–2023 avg | Annual 2027 target | Annual 2028 target | Final & Annual 2029 target |
|---|---|---|---|
| 91.3% | 91.4% | 91.5% | 91.6% |




y = 0.51x – 948.39 | Baseline: 2019–2023 five-year moving average | Source: NHTSA FARS 2020–2023 Final File and Tennessee State Survey

Tennessee's observed seat belt use rate has shown a generally positive trend in recent years, and it is the intent of the Tennessee Highway Safety Office to build on that progress and achieve a continued increase in the five-year moving average observed seat belt use rate from 91.32 percent (2019—2023) to 91.6 percent by December 31, 2029. This increase will be accomplished, in part, through increased funding to highway safety provided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, expanded partnerships developed through the public participation and engagement process, and sustained occupant protection education and enforcement efforts aligned with the integrated communications plan.

# Countermeasure Strategies

The following countermeasure strategies have been selected in accordance with 23 CFR Part 1300.11(b)(4), which requires each State to describe the countermeasure strategies that will guide program implementation and annual project selection in order to achieve the performance targets identified in this plan.

Each strategy presented below addresses a specific problem identified during the planning process and includes a description of the link between that problem and the selected countermeasure. Where applicable, countermeasures rated three or more stars in Countermeasures That Work, 11th Edition (NHTSA, 2023), recommended in a NHTSA-facilitated program assessment, or included in the Uniform Guidelines for State Highway Safety Programs are cited accordingly. For any countermeasure that falls outside those categories, supporting justification is provided to demonstrate the effectiveness of the proposed strategy.

All strategies described herein are grounded in Tennessee's current data, aligned with identified program area needs, and defensible under the federal requirements of 23 CFR Part 1300.

## Countermeasure: Child Passenger Safety

### Project Safety Impact

There are 1,225 Child Passenger Safety Technicians in Tennessee, and three percent currently identify as Spanish speaking. With the population of Spanish-speaking residents in Tennessee continuing to grow, identifying, increasing, and maintaining the availability of bilingual CPSTs is essential to reaching the state's second-largest demographic, Hispanic or Latino residents. The recertification rate for Tennessee CPSTs is currently just below 50 percent, and maintaining and improving that rate is critical to ensuring caregivers across the state have access to experienced, knowledgeable resources. It is also important to identify additional populations facing language barriers based on census data and to develop outreach and educational materials accordingly. Diverse educational and marketing materials are essential to improving public information and awareness and increasing proper occupant protection adoption by all passengers, including children.

## Countermeasure: Child Passenger Safety *(cont.)*

Training and education have been directed to areas of the state with limited representation of trained CPSTs, which also correspond with higher rates of poverty as identified by the U.S. Census Bureau. Child Passenger Safety training courses have been implemented in all four regions of the state to maximize coverage and opportunities for rural agencies to participate without excessive travel burdens. Extensive outreach to public health providers and community service agencies has increased the diversity of the technician population, opening doors to communities through health departments, medical clinics, social service programs, and more. The THSO plans to conduct multiple certification training courses annually across all four regions of the state, with the goal of increasing the total number of certified technicians and ensuring that inspection stations and events are staffed by nationally certified CPSTs. There is an increased need for occupant protection training courses to reach all passengers from birth throughout the lifespan, and these new partnerships create the infrastructure to deliver that training.

The 1,225 currently trained CPSTs and 186 fitting stations provide services to nearly 91 percent of Tennessee counties. However, a ratio of approximately 880,000 children to 1,225 CPSTs — roughly one technician per 667 children — indicates a significant gap in coverage. This disparity makes it difficult to reach the entire state with adequate service, leaving communities, particularly in rural areas, with limited access to trained resources. Tennessee law falls short of nationally promoted best practices in some areas of child passenger safety, with rear-facing requirements tied only to weight and age minimums of 20 pounds and 12 months. However, Tennessee's booster seat requirement through age eight and four feet, nine inches in height exceeds the standard set by all eight neighboring states. There are variances in Tennessee law in comparison to those border states — Kentucky, Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, and Missouri. With child restraints required until age nine in Tennessee, travelers whose home state has a lower threshold may not be compliant once they cross the state line for daily commutes or extracurricular activities. All eight neighbors require the use of a child restraint system for children seven years old or younger. Only North Carolina requires rear-facing to age two.

Tennessee is a primary offense state, but there is no requirement for adult rear-seat passengers 18 and older. According to the GHSA state law comparison of Tennessee border states, only Georgia and Missouri require rear-seat passenger belt use for occupants over age 16. Rear-seat passengers make up approximately half of unrestrained fatalities in Tennessee. Intrastate travel presents a unique educational opportunity to promote Tennessee's higher standards in child safety. Research shows that children whose parents buckle up are more likely to be buckled up themselves — parents remain the number one influence on seat belt use among tweens and teens, even in the rear seat. Currently,

## Countermeasure: Child Passenger Safety *(cont.)*

Tennessee's observational seat belt use rate is reported at over 90 percent; however, the number of unrestrained fatalities does not correlate with that figure. It is important to note that the observational survey collects data on front-seat passengers only.

| Agency | County | Population served (Urban / Rural) | Above Average Poverty | African American | Latino / Hispanic |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Anderson County Sheriff's Office | Anderson | U | P | | |
| Oak Ridge Police Dept. | Anderson | U | P | | |
| Bedford County Sheriffs Office | Bedford | R | P | | |
| Shelbyville Police Department | Bedford | R | P | | |
| Alcoa Fire Dept. | Blount | U | | | |
| Blount County Fire Dept. Station 2 | Blount | U | | | |
| Blount County Sheriff's Office | Blount | U | | | |
| Maryville Fire Dept. | Blount | U | | | |
| Bradley County Health Dept. | Bradley | U | P | | L |
| Bradley County Sheriff's Office | Bradley | U | P | | L |
| Charleston Police Department | Bradley | U | P | | L |
| Cleveland Police Department | Bradley | U | P | | L |
| Campbell County Sheriff's Office | Campbell | R | P | | |
| Destination Upward | Carroll | R | P | | |

## Countermeasure: Child Passenger Safety *(cont.)*

| Agency | County | Population served (Urban / Rural) | Above Average Poverty | African American | Latino / Hispanic |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| McKenzie Police Department | Carroll | R | P | | |
| Ashland City Fire Department | Cheatham | R | P | | |
| Pleasant View Police Department | Cheatham | R | P | | |
| Pleasant View Volunteer Fire Department | Cheatham | R | P | | |
| Henderson Police Department | Chester | R | P | | |
| Cocke County Health Department | Cocke | R | P | | |
| Cocke County Sheriff's Department | Cocke | R | P | | |
| Manchester Fire-Rescue | Coffee | R | P | | |
| Manchester Police Department | Coffee | R | P | | |
| Tennessee Highway Patrol - Chattanooga District | Coffee | R | P | | |
| Fairfield Glade Police Department | Cumberland | R | P | | |
| Cumberland Co Health Department | Cumberland | R | P | | |
| Van Buren County Sheriff’s Office | Cumberland | R | P | | |
| Belle Meade Police Department | Davidson | U | P | A | L |

## Countermeasure: Child Passenger Safety *(cont.)*

| Agency | County | Population served (Urban / Rural) | Above Average Poverty | African American | Latino / Hispanic |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Nashville Metro Police Department | Davidson | U | P | A | L |
| Nashville Metro Police Department - South East Precinct | Davidson | U | P | A | L |
| Safe Haven Family Shelter | Davidson | U | P | A | L |
| Decatur County Sheriff's Office | Decatur | R | P | | |
| TN Dept. of Health-Smithville | DeKalb | R | P | | L |
| Dickson County Sheriff's Office | Dickson | R | | | |
| Dickson Fire Department | Dickson | R | | | |
| Somerville Police Department | Fayette | R | | A | |
| Tennessee Highway Patrol - Fayette County | Fayette | R | | A | |
| Fentress County Health Department | Fentress | R | P | | |
| Franklin County Sheriff's Office | Franklin | R | P | | |
| TN Department of Health - C.H.A.N.T - Franklin County | Franklin | R | P | | |
| Milan Police Department | Gibson | R | P | A | |
| Humboldt Fire Department | Gibson | R | P | | |
| Greene County Sheriff's Office | Greene | R | P | | |

## Countermeasure: Child Passenger Safety *(cont.)*

| Agency | County | Population served (Urban / Rural) | Above Average Poverty | African American | Latino / Hispanic |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grundy County Health Depatment/CHANT | Grundy | R | P | | |
| Grundy County Sheriff's Office | Grundy | R | P | | |
| Tracy City Police Department | Grundy | R | P | | |
| Dandridge Police Department | Hamblen | R | P | | |
| Hamblen County 911 | Hamblen | U | P | | L |
| Catholic Charities Pregnancy Help Center - Hamilton | Hamilton | U | | | L |
| Children's Hospital at Erlanger | Hamilton | U | | | L |
| Erlanger Children's Hospital | Hamilton | U | | | L |
| Family Forward_Signal Centers | Hamilton | U | | | L |
| Hamilton County Health Dept. | Hamilton | U | | | L |
| Nurture the Next | Hamilton | U | | | L |
| Tennessee Highway Patrol-District 2 | Hamilton | U | | | L |
| Bolivar Police Department | Hardeman | R | P | A | |
| Whiteville Police Department | Hardeman | R | P | A | |
| Hawkins County EMS | Hawkins | R | P | | |
| Hawkins County Sheriff's Office | Hawkins | R | P | | |

## Countermeasure: Child Passenger Safety *(cont.)*

| Agency | County | Population served (Urban / Rural) | Above Average Poverty | African American | Latino / Hispanic |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lexington Police Department | Henderson | R | P | | |
| Jackson County Health Department | Jackson | R | P | | |
| Jefferson City Fire Department | Jefferson | R | | | |
| Jefferson County Health Department | Jefferson | R | P | | |
| Catholic Charities Pregnancy Help Center - East TN | Knox | U | | | |
| Knoxville Police Department | Knox | U | | | |
| Tennessee Highway Patrol-District 1 | Knox | U | | | |
| Tennessee Highway Patrol - Lawrenceburg District | Lawrence | R | P | | |
| City of Loudon Fire & Police Department | Loudon | U | | | L |
| Lenoir City Fire Department | Loudon | U | | | L |
| Lenoir City Police Department | Loudon | U | | | L |
| Lenior City Fire Station 2 | Loudon | U | | | L |
| Macon County Health Department | Macon | R | P | | |
| City of Jackson Fire Department | Madison | U | P | A | |
| Jackson Madison County Health Department CHANT | Madison | U | P | A | |

## Countermeasure: Child Passenger Safety *(cont.)*

| Agency | County | Population served (Urban / Rural) | Above Average Poverty | African American | Latino / Hispanic |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Madison County Fire Department | Madison | U | P | A | |
| Southwest Tennessee Child Care Resource and Referral Agency | Madison | U | P | A | |
| Tennessee Highway Patrol - Jackson District | Madison | U | P | A | |
| United Way of West Tennessee | Madison | U | P | A | |
| West Tennessee Healthcare | Madison | U | P | A | |
| Marion County Health Department | Marion | R | P | | |
| Whitwell Police Department | Marion | R | P | | |
| Chapel Hill Police Department | Marshall | R | P | | |
| Chapel Hill Police Department | Marshall | R | P | | |
| Columbia Fire Department | Maury | R | | | L |
| Maury County Sheriff's Department | Maury | R | | | L |
| Athens Police Department | McMinn | R | P | | |
| City of Etowah Fire Department | McMinn | R | P | | |
| Etowah Fire and Rescue | McMinn | R | P | | |

## Countermeasure: Child Passenger Safety *(cont.)*

| Agency | County | Population served (Urban / Rural) | Above Average Poverty | African American | Latino / Hispanic |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| McMinn County Health Department | McMinn | R | P | | |
| Sweetwater Fire Department | McMinn | R | P | | |
| Selmer Police Department | McNairy | R | P | | |
| CASA Monroe | Monroe | R | P | | |
| Madisonville Fire Dept. | Monroe | R | P | | |
| MONROE COUNTY HEALTH DEPT | Monroe | R | P | | |
| Monroe County Sheriff's Dept. | Monroe | R | P | | |
| Clarksville Police Department | Montgomery | U | | A | L |
| Fort Campbell Police Department | Montgomery | U | | A | L |
| Hope Pregnancy Center | Montgomery | U | | A | L |
| Montgomery Co. Sheriff's Office | Montgomery | U | | A | L |
| Montgomery County Driver Safety | Montgomery | U | | A | L |
| The Center for Family Development @ Clarksville | Montgomery | U | | A | L |
| Union City Police Department | Obion | R | P | | |
| Overton County Health Dept. | Overton | R | P | | |

## Countermeasure: Child Passenger Safety *(cont.)*

| Agency | County | Population served (Urban / Rural) | Above Average Poverty | African American | Latino / Hispanic |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Polk County Health Dept. | Polk | R | P | | |
| Cookeville Police Department - Main | Putnam | R | P | | L |
| Putnam County Emergency Medical Services | Putnam | R | P | | L |
| TN Occupant Protection Center | Putnam | R | P | | L |
| Adventure Gym | Putnam | R | P | | L |
| Monterey Police Department | Putnam | R | P | | L |
| Putnam County Health Department | Putnam | R | P | | L |
| Spring City Police Department | Rhea | R | P | | |
| Dayton Police Department | Rhea | R | P | | |
| Safe Journey - Rhea County Sheriff's Office | Rhea | R | P | | |
| Kingsport Fire Dept. | Roane | R | P | | |
| Life Choices Medical Center | Roane | R | P | | |
| Roane County Sheriffs Office | Roane | R | P | | |
| Robertson County Sheriff's Office | Robertson | R | | | L |
| Tennessee Highway Patrol - Robertson County | Robertson | R | | | L |

## Countermeasure: Child Passenger Safety *(cont.)*

| Agency | County | Population served (Urban / Rural) | Above Average Poverty | African American | Latino / Hispanic |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The Center for Family Development @ White House | Robertson | R | | | L |
| La Vergne Police Department | Rutherford | U | | A | L |
| Murfreesboro Police Department | Rutherford | U | | A | L |
| Rutherford County Sherriff's Office | Rutherford | U | | A | L |
| Smyrna Fire Department | Rutherford | U | | A | L |
| Sequatchie County Sheriff's Office | Sequatchie | R | P | | |
| Sequatchie County TDOH - C.H.A.N.T | Sequatchie | R | P | | |
| Gatlinburg Fire Department | Sevier | R | P | | L |
| Gatlinburg Police Department | Sevier | R | P | | L |
| Pigeon Forge Police Department | Sevier | R | P | | L |
| Sevier County Volunteer Rescue Squad | Sevier | R | P | | L |
| Sevierville Police Department | Sevier | R | P | | L |
| Seymour Fire Department | Sevier | R | P | | L |
| Baptist Memorial Hospital for Women | Shelby | U | P | A | L |
| Bartlett Police Department | Shelby | U | P | A | L |

## Countermeasure: Child Passenger Safety *(cont.)*

| Agency | County | Population served (Urban / Rural) | Above Average Poverty | African American | Latino / Hispanic |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Collierville Police Department | Shelby | U | P | A | L |
| Germantown Police Department | Shelby | U | P | A | L |
| Le Bonheur Children's Hospital | Shelby | U | P | A | L |
| Memphis Police Department - Traffic Station | Shelby | U | P | A | L |
| Shelby County Health Department | Shelby | U | P | A | L |
| Shelby County Sheriff Office | Shelby | U | P | A | L |
| Tennessee Highway Patrol - Summer Ave | Shelby | U | P | A | L |
| Memphis Police Depeartment- Tillman Station | Shelby | U | P | A | L |
| Millington Police Department | Shelby | U | P | A | L |
| The Center for Family Development @ Dover | Stewart | R | | | |
| Appalachian Promise Alliance | Sullivan | U | P | | |
| Bristol Fire Department | Sullivan | U | P | | |
| East Sullivan County FD | Sullivan | U | P | | |
| Kingsport Fire Dept. | Sullivan | U | P | | |
| Sullivan County Sheriff's Office | Sullivan | U | P | | |

## Countermeasure: Child Passenger Safety *(cont.)*

| Agency | County | Population served (Urban / Rural) | Above Average Poverty | African American | Latino / Hispanic |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Hendersonville Fire Department | Sumner | U | | | |
| Hendersonville Police Department | Sumner | U | | | |
| Portland Police Department | Sumner | U | | | |
| Sumner County Sheriff's Office | Sumner | U | | | |
| Atoka Police Department | Tipton | R | | | |
| Covington Police Department | Tipton | R | | | |
| Tipton County Sheriff's Office | Tipton | R | | | |
| Town of Erwin Fire Department | Unicoi | R | P | | |
| Union County Health Department | Union | R | P | | |
| McMinnville Fire Department #1 | Warren | R | P | | L |
| McMinnville Fire Department #2 | Warren | R | P | | L |
| McMinnville Police Department | Warren | R | P | | L |
| Warren County Sheriff's Department | Warren | R | P | | L |
| Ballad Health/Niswonger Children's Hospital | Washington | U | P | | |
| Johnson City Fire Department administration | Washington | U | P | | |

## Countermeasure: Child Passenger Safety *(cont.)*

| Agency | County | Population served (Urban / Rural) | Above Average Poverty | African American | Latino / Hispanic |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Johnson City Fire Department Station 1 | Washington | U | P | | |
| Johnson City Police Department | Washington | U | P | | |
| Washington County Sheriff's Office | Washington | U | P | | |
| Tennessee Highway Patrol District 5 | Washington | U | P | | |
| Martin Fire Department | Weakley | R | P | | |
| Martin Police Department | Weakley | R | P | | |
| Sparta Police Department | White | R | P | | |
| Brentwood Fire & Rescue Department | Williamson | U | | | |
| Fairview Police Department | Williamson | U | | | |
| Franklin Police Department | Williamson | U | | | |
| Spring Hill Police Department | Williamson | U | | | |
| Williamson County Sheriff's Office | Williamson | U | | | |
| Lebanon Police Department | Wilson | R | | | |
| Wilson County Health Department - CHANT | Wilson | R | | | |
| Wilson County Sheriff's Office | Wilson | R | | | |

# Countermeasure: Child Passenger Safety *(cont.)*

## Linkage Between Program Areas

CPS technicians and instructors apply the knowledge and expertise gained through continued training to provide services at a variety of community-based activities, including child safety seat checks where parents and caregivers receive hands-on education and assistance. Motor vehicle crashes remain a leading cause of death for children under 14, and the continued presence of trained CPSTs in communities across Tennessee is essential to closing that gap (What Is a Child Passenger Safety Technician? Pediatric Trauma Injury Prevention Program, n.d.).

It is also imperative to consider additional training programs that promote seat belt safety across all populations. The Occupant Protection Specialist certification program incorporates evidence-based strategies for reducing roadway injuries and fatalities and supports best practices for protecting all vehicle occupants, regardless of age, size, or seating position. Occupant Protection Specialist training addresses how proper occupant protection — including seat belts, air bags, child restraints, and seating positions — fits into a larger strategy to reduce the severity of injuries in crashes.

## Rationale

NHTSA's Countermeasures That Work, 11th Edition, identifies outreach to caregivers and children as an effective strategy for increasing restraint use. Within the "Seat Belts and Child Restraints" section, Programs for Older Children and Inspection Stations are both designated as 3-star countermeasures. These evidence-based strategies serve as the foundational pillars for child passenger safety initiatives in Tennessee.

## Funding Consideration

It is the intent of the THSO to fund agencies to help increase the understanding of caregivers so that children can be properly restrained on Tennessee roadways.

## Estimated Budget

| FFY | Funding Source | Eligible Use of Funds | Estimated Amount |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2027 | BIL 405b OP High | 405b High Community CPS Services (BIL) | $300,000 |
| 2028 | BIL 405b OP High | 405b High Community CPS Services (BIL) | $300,000 |
| 2029 | BIL 405b OP High | 405b High Community CPS Services (BIL) | $300,000 |
| | | **Total Over Three Years** | **$900,000** |

# Countermeasure: Occupant Protection Enforcement

## Project Safety Impact

Tennessee continues to support the enforcement of seat belt and child passenger safety laws. Highly publicized and visible waves of enforcement are necessary for increasing the public's perception of the risk of a citation, which is a critical component toward increased seat belt compliance by those risk-takers who are least likely to buckle up.

Occupant protection is a priority for law enforcement across the state. State and local agencies actively engage in enforcement and education as part of their mission to ensure their communities stay safe. Several of the THSO's police traffic services grants include a seat belt enforcement component. Nighttime enforcement is an emphasis area for many states, and Tennessee is no exception. The THSO recognizes that increasing seat belt usage among those traveling at night could meaningfully decrease crashes along with injury and fatality rates.

Tennessee implements a strong media and enforcement campaign targeting increased occupant protection use, with three groups as the primary focus: male drivers, drivers in rural counties, and drivers on local roads. The media campaign includes radio and television advertising as well as local input during the NHTSA-sponsored Click It or Ticket campaign. National and locally produced media are used throughout the specified time frame, and the THSO provides signage at local events to display the Click It or Ticket message, strategically placed to reach the targeted demographic.

Mobilizations are high-profile law enforcement programs combined with paid and earned media, evaluated through observations of belt use and surveys of public awareness and behavioral change. Each mobilization follows a structured approach: two weeks of high-intensity traffic law enforcement paired with year-round seat belt education; intense publicity through both paid and earned channels, utilizing messages that increase the public's perception of the dangers associated with not buckling up; pre and post observational surveys incorporating current data; pre and post knowledge, attitude, and behavior surveys; and immediate reporting of enforcement and media activity within specific mobilization areas of local jurisdictions.

Law enforcement participation is critical to reducing fatalities and serious injuries on Tennessee roads. For the planned Memorial Day Click It or Ticket mobilization, the agencies listed on the next pages are anticipated to participate.

## Countermeasure: Occupant Protection Enforcement *(cont.)*

Adamsville Police Department
Alamo Police Department
Alcoa Police Department
Alexandria Police Department
Anderson County Sheriff's Office
Ashland City Police Department
Athens Police Department
Atoka Police Department
Austin Peay State University Police Department
Baileyton Police Department
Bartlett Police Department
Baxter Police Department
Bedford County Sheriff's Department
Belle Meade Police Department
Bells Police Department
Benton County Sheriff's Department
Benton Police Department
Bethel Springs Police Department
Blaine Police Department
Bledsoe County Sheriff's Department
Blount County Sheriff's Office
Bradley County Sheriff's Department
Brighton Police Department
Bristol Police Department
Bruceton Police Department
Burns Police Department
Campbell County Sheriff's Department
Cannon County Sheriff's Department
Carroll County Sheriff's Office
Carter County Sheriff's Department
Caryville Police Department
Celina Police Department
Chapel Hill Police Department
Charleston Police Department
Chattanooga Metropolitan Airport Police
Chattanooga Police Department
Cheatham County Sheriff's Office
City of Paris Police Department
Clarksville Police Department
Cleveland Police Department
Cocke County Sheriff's Department
Coffee County Sheriff's Department
Collegedale Police Department
Collierville Police Department
Collinwood Police Department
Columbia Police Department
Cookeville Police Department
Coopertown Police Department
Covington Police Department
Crockett County Sheriff's Department
Cross Plains Police Department
Cumberland County Sheriff's Department
Dandridge Police Department
Dayton Police Department
Decatur County Sheriff's Office
Decatur Police Department
Decaturville Police Department
Decherd Police Department
Dickson County Sheriff's Office
Dickson Police Department
Dover Police Department
Dresden Police Department
Dunlap Police Department
Dyer Police Department
Dyersburg Police Department
East Ridge Police Department
Elkton Police Department
Englewood Police Department
Erwin Police Department
Estill Springs Police Department
Etowah Police Department
Fairfield Glade Police Department
Fairview Police Department
Fayette County Sheriff's Office
Fayetteville Police Department
Fentress County Sheriff's Office
Franklin County Sheriff's Office
Franklin Police Department
Gadsden Police Department

## Countermeasure: Occupant Protection Enforcement *(cont.)*

Gainesboro Police Department
Gatlinburg Police Department
Germantown Police Department
Giles County Sheriff's Department
Gleason Police Department
Goodlettsville Police Department
Grainger County Sheriff's Department
Graysville Police Department
Greenbrier Police Department
Greene County Sheriff's Department
Greeneville Police Department
Greenfield Police Department
Grundy County Sheriff's Office
Halls Police Department
Hamilton County Sheriff's Office
Hancock County Sheriff's Department
Hardeman County Sheriff's Department
Hardin County Sheriff's Department
Harriman Police Department
Hawkins County Sheriff's Department
Haywood County Sheriff's Department
Henderson Police Department
Hendersonville Police Department
Henry County Sheriff's Department
Hickman County Sheriff's Department
Hohenwald Police Department
Houston County Sheriff's Department
Humboldt Police Department
Humphreys County Sheriff's Office
Huntingdon Police Department
Jackson County Sheriff's Department
Jackson Police Department
Jamestown Police Department
Jasper Police Department
Jefferson County Sheriff's Department
Johnson City Police Department
Jonesborough Police Department
Kenton Police Department
Kimball Police Department
Kingsport Police Department
Kingston Police Department
Knox County Sheriff's Office
Knoxville Police Department
LaFollette Police Department
LaVergne Police Department
Lebanon Police Department
Lenoir City Police Department
Lewisburg Police Department
Lexington Police Department
Livingston Police Department
Lookout Mtn. Police Department
Loretto Police Department
Loudon County Sheriff's Department
Macon County Sheriff's Department
Manchester Police Department
Marion County Sheriff's Department
Martin Police Department
Maryville Police Department
Maury County Sheriff's Department
McEwen Police Department
McKenzie Police Department
McMinn County Sheriff's Department
McMinnville Police Department
Meigs County Sheriff's Department
Metro Moore County Sheriff's Department
Middle Tennessee State University Police Department
Milan Police Department
Millersville Police Department
Millington Police Department
Minor Hill Police Department
Monroe County Sheriff's Department
Monteagle Police Department
Monterey Police Department
Montgomery County Sheriff's Department
Morgan County Sheriff Department
Morristown Police Department
Munford Police Department
Murfreesboro Police Department
New Johnsonville Police Department

## Countermeasure: Occupant Protection Enforcement *(cont.)*

New Market Police Department
New Tazewell Police Department
Newbern Police Department
Newport Police Department
Niota Police Department
Nolensville Police Department
Oak Ridge Police Department
Oakland Police Department
Obion County Sheriff's Office
Oliver Springs Police Department
Oneida Police Department
Overton County Sheriff's Department
Parrottsville Police Department
Parsons Police Department
Perry County Sheriff's Office
Pickett County Sheriff's Office
Pikeville Police Department
Piperton Police Department
Pittman Center Police Department
Plainview Police Department
Pleasant View Police Department
Polk County Sheriff's Department
Portland Police Department
Pulaski Police Department
Red Bank Police Department
Rhea County Sheriff's Department
Roane County Sheriff's Office
Robertson County Sheriff's Department
Rockwood Police Department
Rocky Top Police Department
Rogersville Police Department
Rossville Police Department
Rutherford County Sheriff's Office
Rutledge Police Department
Saint Joseph Police Department
Savannah Police Department
Scotts Hill Police Department
Selmer Police Department
Sequatchie County Sheriff's Department
Sevier County Sheriff's Office
Sevierville Police Department
Sharon Police Department
Shelby County Sheriff's Office
Shelbyville Police Department
Signal Mountain Police Department
Smithville Police Department
Smyrna Police Department
Soddy-Daisy Police Department
Somerville Police Department
South Fulton Police Deptartment
South Pittsburg Police Department
Sparta Police Department
Spencer Police Department
Spring City Police Department
Spring Hill Police Department
Springfield Police Department
Stewart County Sheriff's Office
Sullivan County Sheriff's Department
Sumner County Sheriff's Department
Surgoinsville Police Department
Sweetwater Police Department
Tazewell Police Department
Tellico Plains Police Department
Tennessee Association of Chiefs of Police
Tennessee Sheriffs' Association
Tennessee Tech University Police Department
Tipton County Sheriff's Department
Toone Police Department
Townsend Police Department
Tracy City Police Department
Trenton Police Department
Trousdale County Sheriff's Department
Tullahoma Police Department
Tusculum Police Department
Unicoi County Sheriff's Department
Union City Police Department
Union County Sheriff's Department
University of Tennessee Health Science Center Campus Police Department

## Countermeasure: Occupant Protection Enforcement *(cont.)*

Van Buren County Sheriff's Department
Vonore Police Department
Warren County Sheriff's Department
Wartburg Police Department
Wartrace Police Department
Washington County Sheriff's Department
Watertown Police Department
Waynesboro Police Department
Weakley County Sheriff's Department
Westmoreland Police Department
White County Sheriff's Department
White House Police Department
White Pine Police Department
Williamson County Sheriff's Department
Wilson County Sheriff's Department
Winchester Police Department
Woodbury Police Department

### Linkage Between Program Areas

Occupant protection education, enforcement, and outreach work together to build the partnerships necessary to change driver behavior. The THSO and its partnering agencies will continue to promote safe occupant protection practices to the driving public across Tennessee. Enforcement activity reinforces communications messaging by increasing the perceived risk of a citation, and together these strategies create the conditions for sustained behavioral change that reduces crashes, injuries, and fatalities on Tennessee roadways.

### Rationale

According to NHTSA's Countermeasures That Work, 11th Edition, enforcement is a strong and effective component of an occupant protection program. Short-Term, High-Visibility Seat Belt Law Enforcement is rated a 5-star countermeasure (Section 2.1), Integrated Nighttime Seat Belt Enforcement is rated 4 stars (Section 2.2), and Sustained Enforcement carries a 3-star rating (Section 2.3).

### Funding Consideration

It is the intent of the THSO to fund local and state law enforcement agencies to enforce daytime and nighttime seat belt laws throughout the state.

### Estimated Budget

| FFY | Funding Source | Eligible Use of Funds | Estimated Amount |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2027 | BIL 405b OP High | 405b High HVE (BIL) | $140,000 |
| 2028 | BIL 405b OP High | 405b High HVE (BIL) | $140,000 |
| 2029 | BIL 405b OP High | 405b High HVE (BIL) | $140,000 |
| | | **Total Over Three Years** | **$420,000** |

## Countermeasure: Communication (Media) — Occupant Protection

### Project Safety Impact

The THSO will utilize both earned and paid media as part of an integrated communications plan that works in tandem with the NHTSA Communications Calendar. This plan requires cohesive collaboration to reinforce Tennessee laws and change driver behavior. The THSO has engaged in a state interagency contractual agreement with Tennessee Technological University (TTU) to provide media buying, marketing, and advertising services to facilitate behavioral change. Services include feature design, production, purchasing, and administrative reconciliation to assist the state in informing and educating the public on traffic safety issues. Primary services encompass the purchasing and creation of audio spots (radio and streaming), television (network and cable) time, social media, digital advertising (display, pre-roll, native, and Over-the-Top Television [OTT]), cinema ads, and Out-of-Home (OOH) advertising to deliver THSO traffic safety messages across the state. TTU will employ a data-driven approach to media buys, utilizing statewide crash and fatality statistics to most effectively engage the target audience of males ages 18 to 34, with the goal of reducing fatalities, injuries, and the associated economic losses resulting from traffic crashes.

The THSO will participate in several sports-related media partnerships and will partner with private entities across the state to deliver its messages in high-traffic areas, including the Dollywood theme park and numerous middle and high school sporting events and promotions through Murphy Fair and Huddle Tickets statewide. Huddle Tickets alone reaches hundreds of schools across Tennessee with a seat belt message. The THSO anticipates identifying additional public events that attract the target demographic throughout the life of this plan.

The THSO will also deploy educational messaging to inform the public about the dangers of leaving a child or unattended passenger in a vehicle after the motor has been turned off. This message will be delivered through both paid and owned media resources, including social media and the THSO website, to maximize reach on this lifesaving issue.

The THSO's earned media efforts encompass traditional news media, digital news media, and social media. The THSO will continue pitching traditional news outlets including local radio, television, and print newspapers, while substantially increasing digital communications and social media efforts as technology continues to advance. The THSO often collaborates with traffic safety partners and community advocates to host press events during media campaigns — a tactic used to increase community support, personalize

## Countermeasure: Communication (Media) — Occupant Protection *(cont.)*

the enforcement message, localize the issue, and elevate awareness for crash victims and their families. All THSO press events are video recorded, uploaded to YouTube, and shared across social media platforms.

The THSO website, TNTrafficSafety, serves as the primary hub for the agency's digital assets, providing Tennessee traffic crash data, news and information, event calendars, educational resources, and more. Each month, the THSO builds a digital social media calendar populated with content based on the NHTSA communications calendar, supplemented with creative content developed to capitalize on social media trends, upcoming events, and relevant topics. Once approved by THSO management, all content is scheduled for posting through Hootsuite. The THSO closely monitors its social media presence using platform analytics, with its most active channels being YouTube, Facebook, and X (formerly Twitter). Social media reports are generated and shared with the management team following each campaign to assess which content generated the most interest and engagement.

### Linkage Between Program Areas

The Click It or Ticket campaign delivers an enforcement message through designated campaign periods, targeting males ages 18 to 34 in rural areas. Campaign elements include audio spots (radio and streaming), television (network and cable), social media, digital advertising (display, pre-roll, native, and OTT), cinema ads, and Out-of-Home placements. Advertising outreach is measured against the frequency and reach goals established by NHTSA for national paid media campaigns.

Outside of enforcement periods, the social norming messages "Buckle Up, Tennessee" and "Buckle Up in Your Truck" are used during the Thanksgiving holiday and other state initiatives. Target demographics for each campaign are selected based on state-specific, historical crash data. Earned media strategies are coordinated alongside paid media, awareness efforts, and enforcement campaigns to optimize reach across all target audiences.

The THSO's overall communications goal is to align paid media, education, awareness, and enforcement during scheduled campaign periods. To support each occupant protection campaign, the THSO works with Tennessee Tech University iCube to update educational materials with current data, maintain the THSO website's calendar of events, and prepare occupant protection messaging for monthly social media calendars. The "Buckle Up Tennessee" social norming message will be deployed during Valentine's Day in February,

## Countermeasure: Communication (Media) — Occupant Protection *(cont.)*

summer months, Child Passenger Safety Week in September, and the Thanksgiving travel season in November. "Click It or Ticket" messaging will be used on social media during the enforcement period in May and June, with press release templates prepared for agencies conducting enforcement activity. The THSO may also provide support for agencies hosting press events to launch their local campaigns and will share photos and public service announcements created by grantees.

The THSO will support local Hispanic communities by inviting Hispanic media outlets to press events and sharing available Spanish-language marketing materials, with the goal of expanding Spanish-language resources as NHTSA develops additional materials for state use.

### Rationale

According to NHTSA's Countermeasures That Work, 11th Edition, communications and outreach supporting enforcement is a 5-star strategy for educating motorists about the dangers of unrestrained driving.

### Funding Consideration

The THSO plans to provide paid educational public service announcements focused on reducing unrestrained driving and changing the social norms of high-risk demographics through paid media contracts and a grant agreement with Tennessee Technological University. The THSO also intends to provide earned media opportunities to increase education and awareness about seat belt usage in local communities across Tennessee.

### Estimated Budget

| FFY | Funding Source | Eligible Use of Funds | Estimated Amount |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2027 | BIL 405b OP High | 405b High Paid Advertising (BIL) | $400,000 |
| 2027 | NHTSA 402 | Paid Advertising | $30,000 |
| 2028 | BIL 405b OP High | 405b High Paid Advertising (BIL) | $400,000 |
| 2028 | NHTSA 402 | Paid Advertising | $30,000 |
| 2029 | BIL 405b OP High | 405b High Paid Advertising (BIL) | $400,000 |
| 2029 | NHTSA 402 | Paid Advertising | $30,000 |
| | | **Total Over Three Years** | **$1,290,000** |

# Countermeasure: Evaluation Surveys and Studies

## Project Safety Impact

NHTSA's Countermeasures That Work, 11th Edition, identifies convincing all passenger vehicle occupants to use appropriate restraints as one of the central challenges in occupant protection. Proper restraint use — seat belts for adults and age-appropriate child restraints for younger passengers — remains the single most effective means of saving lives and reducing injuries in crashes. The results of Tennessee's evaluation surveys help the THSO determine which communication and enforcement strategies are most effective and identify the specific subgroups to target with those messages, such as the "Buckle Up in Your Truck" campaign directed at pickup truck drivers.

## Linkage Between Program Area

The annual observational survey of seat belt usage is a highway safety program management responsibility mandated by NHTSA. Results from this survey are used to assess the effectiveness of occupant protection-related education, awareness, and enforcement activities throughout the year and to inform adjustments to the THSO's overall strategy.

## Rationale

This project provides a statistically adjusted statewide average seat belt usage rate based on field observations collected at 190 sites across 16 counties in Tennessee. Evaluation data is compiled into a research report used to interpret and synthesize findings into annual and semi-annual reports, which are required under federal guidelines.

## Funding Consideration

It is the intent of the THSO to fund evaluation surveys and studies for seat belt usage in accordance with the 2012 Uniform Criteria for State Observational Surveys of Seat Belt Use.

## Estimated Budget

| FFY | Funding Source | Eligible Use of Funds | Estimated Amount |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2027 | BIL 405b OP High | 405b High Evaluation (BIL) | $115,000 |
| 2028 | BIL 405b OP High | 405b High Evaluation (BIL) | $115,000 |
| 2029 | BIL 405b OP High | 405b High Evaluation (BIL) | $115,000 |
| | | **Total Over Three Years** | **$345,000** |

# PROGRAM AREA:
# TRAFFIC RECORDS

## Problem ID

According to NHTSA, analyzing reliable and accurate traffic records data is central to identifying traffic safety problems and designing effective countermeasures to reduce injuries and deaths caused by crashes.

Tennessee's traffic records data systems have undergone NHTSA-sponsored assessments in the past decade to identify areas for improvement. As a result of these assessments, Tennessee has developed traffic records data system projects designed to address the assessment recommendations. The 2009 traffic records assessment team reported that the Crash File contained an unacceptably high rate of errors. As a result, the THSO and the TRCC sponsored the TITAN project. The TITAN crash module deployment significantly improved Tennessee traffic crash data's quality, accuracy, and timeliness.

In the first half of the 2017 calendar year, the THSO and the TRCC undertook an effort to improve the state's traffic records strategic planning efforts. These efforts consisted of:

- Updating system descriptions to reflect current systems,
- Revisiting the assessment results and recommendations,
- Holding workshops with data system managers and stakeholders,
- Identifying goals for improvements, and
- Developing strategies to achieve those goals.

This approach to the traffic records strategic plan is still being used.

In the 2026 calendar year, the strategic planning document was updated based on the 2025 traffic records assessment to reflect plans to address the assessors' findings. The result is an updated strategic planning document that reflects current progress. It can be used by the TRCC, data system managers, and decision-makers to guide the prioritization and funding of improvements to Tennessee's traffic records data systems.

Recent improvements to Tennessee's traffic records data systems include the following:

1. An improved Tennessee Roadway Information Management System Crash Location import process was deployed. The new process allowed for a fully automated import of TITAN crash records into the TRIMS system using the latitude and longitude on the crash report and road names to determine location. Over the past few years, TDOT and TITAN have made the process more robust by increasing the number of data elements sent to TRIMS and implementing an automated process for event location in the TRIMS environment. Additionally, TRIMS pushes a set of LRS data from the TDOT roadway data back to the TITAN crash database. In 2022, TDOT deployed an online Numetric AASHTOWare dashboard and mapping tool that allows for extensive access to crash data for state users.

2. The Tennessee TRCC updated the Traffic Records Inventory document in 2023, a consolidated reference of the Tennessee Traffic Records Data Systems. This document was initially developed in response to NHTSA recommendations in the 2014 Traffic Records Assessment. The TRCC, state agencies, and highway safety stakeholders can reference this document when planning improvements to the component data systems to increase highway safety analysis capabilities. The document provides the reader with data governance information and is a reference for system documentation, data dictionaries, and user documentation. The document is used as part of the TRCC's efforts to improve the accessibility, completeness, uniformity, accuracy, integration, and timeliness of Tennessee's traffic records data.

3. For the past several years, TITAN crash data has been available via a THSO website that provides crash geo-analysis by county. In addition, TDOSHS maintains web-based GIS and Business Intelligence services and has deployed over two dozen public-facing crash data dashboards and GIS tools, and several others for internal use. BI and GIS development continues for various traffic safety needs. These projects increase the accessibility of crash data to both traffic safety stakeholders and the public.

4. In 2019, the THP expanded its eCitation program from the three-county pilot program started in 2014 to 95 counties as of May 2026. Also, all 95 counties are auto-importing eCitation data and ticket images to the court clerks electronically. This saves THP, and the court clerks, countless hours of hand-keying citation data into law enforcement and court records management systems and has substantially increased timeliness, data accuracy, and completeness. THP made the eCitation software available to all law enforcement agencies for free and is working to encourage adoption by agencies still using paper citations.

5. In 2023, TDOSHS deployed a new crash PCR, TITAN 2.0. The new PCR is a web-based service that eliminates the need for the TITAN Business Unit and LEAs to maintain software installed on local computers. Additionally, the TITAN 2.0 PCR is integrated with the state's driver and vehicle systems which allows officers to import driver license and registration data directly into the crash report using bar code scanners or ID lookup.

6. In 2019, Tennessee completed a MMUCC v5 compliance review. In a series of TRCC sub- committee meetings in 2021, Tennessee used the review results to establish recommendations for the TITAN development team, which incorporated the MMUCC v5 recommendations in the design of the TITAN 2.0 crash system.

# Performance Target

| Performance Measure Target | Target Metric Type | Actual | Target | Target Start Date | Target End Date |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Percentage of Toxicology Results Reported on Crash Reports** | Percentage | 65.20% | Baseline | 1/1/2025 | 12/31/2025 |
| | | | 67% | 1/1/2026 | 12/31/2026 |

# Qualitative Improvement

In 2024, with the implementation of the TITAN 2.0 PCR, quick capture capability was added to the driver license capture segment of the PCR. This allows officers to scan a Tennessee driver license or enter the driver's license number into the PCR and automatically fetch the driver data from the Tennessee driver system. After implementation, the percentage of drivers involved in crashes with incomplete driver license data dropped from 19.6 percent in 2023 to 14.6 percent in 2024. In 2025, there was a further decline to 13.9 percent of driver records incomplete.

## Proportion of Incomplete Driver License Records

| Start Date | End Date | Incomplete Records | Percent Change |
|---|---|---|---|
| Apr 1, 2023 | Mar 31, 2024 | 19.6% | Baseline |
| Apr 1, 2024 | Mar 31, 2025 | 14.6% | -5.0% |
| Apr 1, 2025 | Mar 31, 2026 | 13.9% | -0.7% |

*Source: TN Dept. of Safety & Homeland Security, TITAN Business Unit, 6/23/2026. (TITAN Crash Database)*

# Countermeasure Strategies

The following countermeasure strategies have been selected in accordance with 23 CFR Part 1300.11(b)(4), which requires each State to describe the countermeasure strategies that will guide program implementation and annual project selection in order to achieve the performance targets identified in this plan.

Each strategy presented below addresses a specific problem identified during the planning process and includes a description of the link between that problem and the selected countermeasure. Where applicable, countermeasures rated three or more stars in Countermeasures That Work, 11th Edition (NHTSA, 2023), recommended in a NHTSA-facilitated program assessment, or included in the Uniform Guidelines for State Highway Safety Programs are cited accordingly. For any countermeasure that falls outside those categories, supporting justification is provided to demonstrate the effectiveness of the proposed strategy.

All strategies described herein are grounded in Tennessee's current data, aligned with identified program area needs, and defensible under the federal requirements of 23 CFR Part 1300.

## Countermeasure: Traffic Records Improvement

### Project Safety Impact

Tennessee must develop and implement effective programs that improve the timeliness, accuracy, completeness, uniformity, integration, and accessibility of state safety data. This data is used for policy development and the allocation of funding for cost-effective projects and programs. Traffic records are core components of public safety, public health, and public security decision support.

### Linkage Between Program Area

A “performance plan” such as the HSP requires accurate data for program and project selection and for measuring the effectiveness of selected programs and projects.This planning function is highly dependent upon the availability and use of quality data from Tennessee’s traffic records data systems.

## Rationale

A complete and comprehensive state traffic records system is essential for effective traffic-related injury control efforts. Traffic records provide the necessary information for:

- Tracking of trends,
- Planning,
- Problem identification,
- Operational management and control, and
- Implementation and evaluation of highway safety programs.

## Funding Consideration

It is the intent of the highway safety office to fund traffic safety information system improvement projects. Using data to support highway safety decisions allows the THSO and its partnering agencies to focus on saving lives and preventing injuries. The work conducted by the TRCC ensures that Tennessee has a multi-year strategic plan to identify high-level goals, objectives, and strategies. Further, members of the TRCC consider and evaluate new technologies to keep the highway safety data and traffic records systems complete and up to date.

## Estimated Budget

| FFY | Funding Source | Eligible Use of Funds | Estimated Amount |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2027 | BIL 405c Data Program | 405c Data Program (BIL) | $910,000 |
| 2028 | BIL 405c Data Program | 405c Data Program (BIL) | $910,000 |
| 2029 | BIL 405c Data Program | 405c Data Program (BIL) | $910,000 |
| | | **Total Over Three Years** | **$2,730,000** |

# PROGRAM AREA: IMPAIRED DRIVING

## Problem ID

Driving while impaired puts all road users in danger. Alcohol, cannabis, and other drugs, including over-the-counter, prescription, and illicit drugs, can affect a person's brain function, judgment, vision, coordination, reaction times, reflexes, and muscle control. Some over-the-counter and prescription drugs can impair driving performance, even when prescribed by a doctor and taken as recommended. Combining multiple drugs or drugs and alcohol may amplify impairing side effects. An impaired person cannot accurately assess their own level of impairment and may make riskier choices or drive dangerously.

In Tennessee, drivers are considered impaired when they operate a motor vehicle under the influence of an impairing substance such as alcohol and/or drugs. Tennessee has a zero-tolerance policy towards underage drinking and driving and strict laws prohibiting impaired driving for drivers over the age of 21.

Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) is a national collaboration of safety professionals using a data-driven approach to develop, implement, evaluate, and refine strategies that make our roads safer. The vision set forth by TZD is a highway system free of fatalities through a sustained and even accelerated decline in transportation-related deaths and serious injuries. Tennessee's commitment to TZD is also reflected in the Safe System Approach (USDOT, 2023) and the National Roadway Safety Strategy (USDOT, 2023), each committed to a vision of zero traffic fatalities and serious injuries

## Alcohol-Impaired Driving Crashes and Fatalities (2021–2025)

Driving Under the Influence (DUI) of alcohol and/or drugs continues to be a significant problem in Tennessee. The data below presents five-year trends through 2024, drawing from the NHTSA State Traffic Safety Information system and the Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security TITAN Business Unit (TN Dept. of Safety and Homeland Security, TITAN Business Unit, April 30, 2026).

| Year | Alcohol-Impaired Crashes | YOY Change | Fatalities | YOY Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2021 | 6,103 | Baseline | 353 | Baseline |
| 2022 | 6,136 | +33 (+0.5%) | 361 | +8 (+2.3%) |
| 2023 | 6,159 | +23 (+0.4%) | 370 | +9 (+2.5%) |
| 2024 | 6,029 | -130 (-2.1%) | 332 | -38 (-10.3%) |
| 2025 | 5,671 | -358 (-5.9%) | 230 | -102 (-30.7%) |

*Sources: 2021–2024, NHTSA State Traffic Safety Information, accessed April 30, 2026. 2025 data, TN Dept. of Safety and Homeland Security, TITAN Business Unit, April 30, 2026 (Fatality Tracking System).*

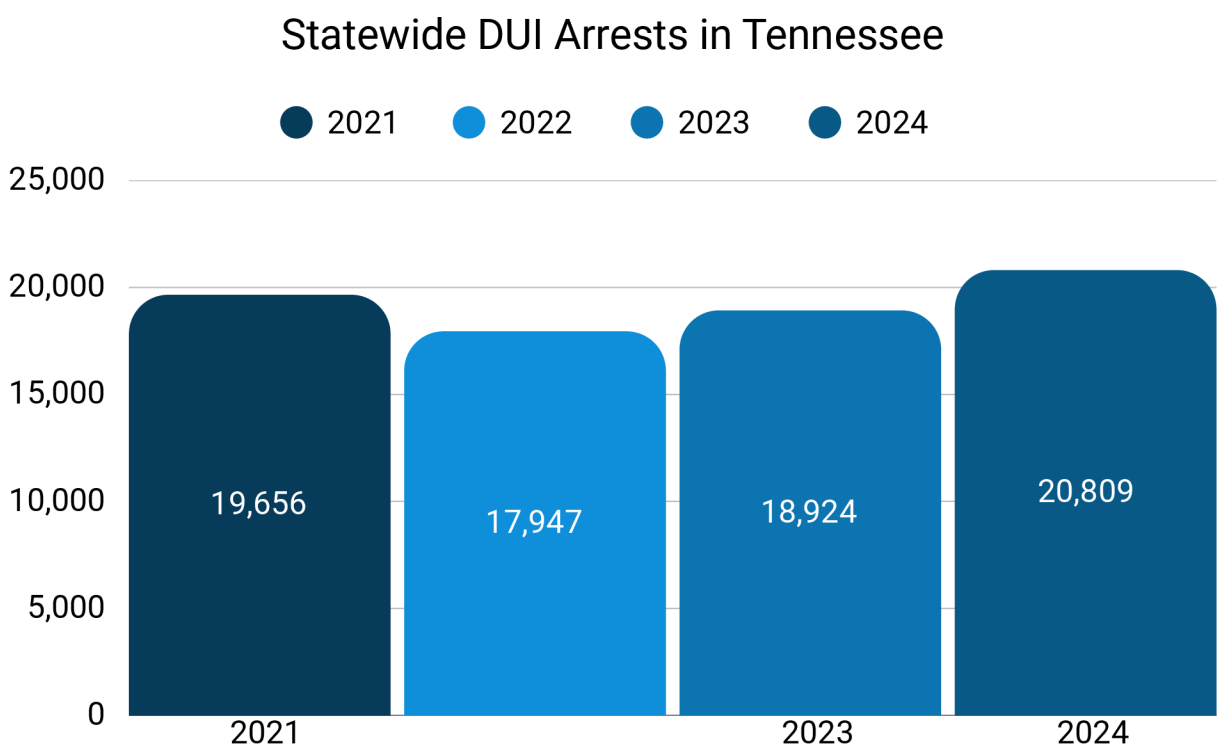
**5,671 crashes · 230 fatalities**

Despite encouraging declines in 2024 and 2025, alcohol-impaired driving remains a persistent and deadly challenge. These numbers represent real families and real loss. The FFY 2027–2029 plan is built on the urgency those numbers demand.

The trend data shows a meaningful improvement beginning in 2024. After alcohol-impaired crashes peaked at 6,159 in 2023, Tennessee recorded 6,029 in 2024 and a more substantial decline to 5,671 in 2025. Similarly, alcohol-impaired fatalities reached a five-year high of 370 in 2023, then declined sharply to 332 in 2024 and 230 in 2025, the lowest figure in the observed period. While the 2025 figure reflects encouraging progress, these levels remain above long-term pre-pandemic baselines and demand sustained intervention. In 2024, alcohol-impaired driving crashes accounted for a material portion of all roadway fatalities in Tennessee, underscoring the persistent need for comprehensive countermeasures.

## DUI Arrests (2021–2024)

Statewide DUI arrest data offers valuable insight into enforcement efforts. The table below shares arrest counts as reported by the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation.




*Source: Tennessee Bureau of Investigation. Crime In Tennessee 2024. Nashville: 2024, p. 8.*

After declining in 2022, DUI arrests increased in 2023 and reached 20,809 in 2024—the highest level in this observed period. This increase in arrests, coinciding with the 2024 decline in fatalities, may indicate that enhanced enforcement activity is producing meaningful deterrence effects.

**20,809 DUI arrests in 2024**

Arrest levels increased following a decline in 2022, reaching a new high in 2024. This sustained enforcement activity, coinciding with a decline in fatalities, may indicate that increased visibility on Tennessee roadways is producing meaningful deterrence effects.

## Substance Abuse Trends and Drug-Impaired Driving

The substance abuse landscape in Tennessee continues to evolve and directly affects the impaired driving problem. Fiscal Year 2018–2022 data from the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS) for individuals receiving TDMHSAS-funded substance abuse treatment and recovery services show the following trends:

Substance of abuse trends among TDMHSAS-funded clients (FY 2018–2022)

**9.8%**
decrease in alcohol (37.6% to 33.9% over five years)

**16%**
decrease in opioids (43.8% to 36.8%)

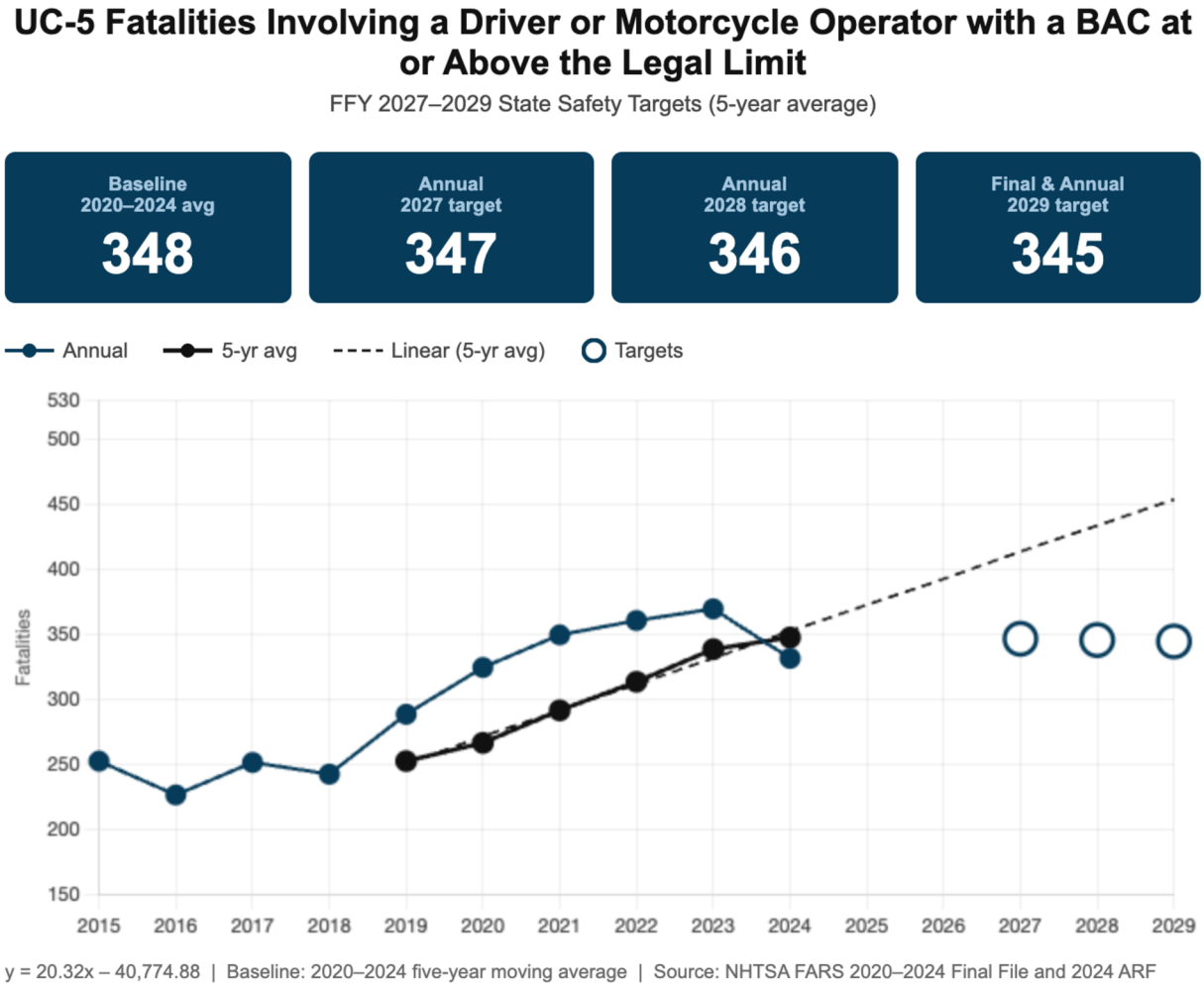
**63.7%**
increase in methamphetamine (28.9% to 47.3%) — now the predominant substance

The methamphetamine trend does not appear to be reversing. Tennessee state funding for substance use treatment more than doubled between FY 2018 and FY 2023, with additional federal grants specifically directed at responding to the rise of stimulant use including methamphetamine (TDMHSAS, 2023). In 2023, Tennessee recorded 3,985 overdose deaths — more than motor vehicle crashes and homicides combined — underscoring the scale of the substance abuse crisis driving drug-impaired driving risk across the state.

The growth of methamphetamine and polysubstance use has significant implications for impaired driving detection and enforcement. Drug-only impairment has been more common in fatal crashes, while alcohol-only impairment has been more common in serious injury crashes, reflecting the distinct risk profiles of different substances. The THSO will continue to address both alcohol and drug impairment through its countermeasure strategy for FFY 2027–2029.

Consistent with national trends, the 11th edition of Countermeasures That Work (NHTSA, 2023) now separates alcohol-impaired driving and drug-impaired driving into two distinct program areas in recognition of the growing complexity and need for targeted countermeasures for each substance category. Tennessee's countermeasure strategy reflects this evolution.

# Performance Target




While alternate baseline and linear trend analyses indicate an increasing trend in fatalities involving a driver or motorcycle operator with a BAC at or above the state's legal limit, it is the intent of the Tennessee Highway Safety Office to work against this trend and achieve a decrease in the five-year moving average number of alcohol-impaired driving fatalities from 347.6 (2020—2024) to 345 by December 31, 2029. This decrease will be accomplished, in part, through increased funding to highway safety provided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, expanded partnerships developed through the public participation and engagement process, and sustained impaired driving education, enforcement, and adjudication efforts aligned with the integrated communications plan.

# Countermeasure Strategies

The following countermeasure strategies have been selected in accordance with 23 CFR Part 1300.11(b)(4), which requires each State to describe the countermeasure strategies that will guide program implementation and annual project selection in order to achieve the performance targets identified in this plan.

Each strategy presented below addresses a specific problem identified during the planning process and includes a description of the link between that problem and the selected countermeasure. Where applicable, countermeasures rated three or more stars in Countermeasures That Work, 11th Edition (NHTSA, 2023), recommended in a NHTSA-facilitated program assessment, or included in the Uniform Guidelines for State Highway Safety Programs are cited accordingly. For any countermeasure that falls outside those categories, supporting justification is provided to demonstrate the effectiveness of the proposed strategy.

All strategies described herein are grounded in Tennessee's current data, aligned with identified program area needs, and defensible under the federal requirements of 23 CFR Part 1300.

## Countermeasure: Blood/Breath Testing Devices

### Project Safety Impact

An important initial step in utilizing proven countermeasures begins with expediting blood and breath impairment testing, and hence the viability of having a robust, safe, and timely review by the state's crime lab. The strategy is to increase capacity to address accredited crime labs' (per the Tennessee Code Annotated) backlog of casework due to the high number of driving under the influence, motor vehicle crash, and vehicular homicide cases; to improve the quality and scope of the lab's toxicology testing of casework, including cases that require additional drug screen testing. This will improve the reliability and consistency of breath/alcohol instruments utilized by local and state law enforcement, and will maintain expertise through continued training and education for scientists in the breath alcohol and toxicology sections of the labs, keeping scientists current on new technologies and new defense issues.

# Countermeasure: Blood/Breath Testing Devices *(cont.)*

## Linkage Between Program Area

Implementing the proposed projects will support the THSO and partnering agencies' mission to decrease impaired driving fatalities, injuries, and crashes. While the lab's efforts do not directly reduce alcohol-related crashes and fatalities, they have a direct effect on enforcing alcohol and impaired driving laws through the conducting of breath and blood alcohol testing and expert testimony utilized in DUI court cases. Given the rise in polysubstance impairment, particularly methamphetamine, enhanced toxicology capacity is more critical than ever.

## Rationale

Countermeasures That Work, 11th Edition (NHTSA, 2023), Chapter 1 (Alcohol-Impaired Driving) and Chapter 2 (Drug-Impaired Driving), supports breath testing devices as a valid component of the enforcement and adjudication continuum. For Tennessee law to be upheld, the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI) or an accredited institution must process samples procured by officers (Tenn. Code Ann. § 55-10-408, 2023). This countermeasure supports both alcohol-impaired and drug-impaired driving program areas, given the 11th edition's separation of these into distinct chapters.

## Funding Consideration

It is the intent of the THSO to fund continued education and training of forensic scientists, along with new lab equipment, to address the increasing capacity need for alcohol and drug-impaired testing to be conducted across Tennessee.

## Estimated Budget

| Source | Funding Source ID | Eligible Use of Funds | Estimated Amount |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2027 | BIL NHTSA 405d Mid | Mid BAC Testing/Reporting (BIL) | $700,000 |
| 2028 | BIL NHTSA 405d Mid | Mid BAC Testing/Reporting (BIL) | $700,000 |
| 2029 | BIL NHTSA 405d Mid | Mid BAC Testing/Reporting (BIL) | $700,000 |
| **Total Over Three-Years** | | | **$2,100,000** |

# Countermeasure: Prosecution

## Project Safety Impact

Prosecutors trained in handling Driving Under the Influence (DUI) cases are better able to withstand defense motions that can negatively impact the administration of justice. Funding for this activity allows for the prosecution of all DUI-related cases in criminal/circuit courts (required) and possibly general sessions (if applicable), ensuring that all DUI offenders are charged correctly and in accordance with their criminal history, monitored from initial charge to conviction, and evaluated to determine the most appropriate intervention or treatment to reduce recidivism and societal costs.

These are carried out through grant funding for specialized DUI prosecution activity. Currently, these projects are in 30 of the 32 judicial districts; however, it remains the THSO's goal to achieve 100 percent judicial district coverage. The charge of this DUI prosecution activity is to make provable cases that result in the prosecution of (in rank order):

- DUI death or serious bodily injury cases, criminal/circuit cases for multiple and felony DUI offenses (not excluding general sessions' court);
- First DUI offenses in criminal court; and
- All DUI offenses in the general sessions' court (if time permits).

DUI prosecutors must ensure accurate, timely entry of data into the DUI Tracker in TITAN and the retrieval of that data to determine how cases are being handled within their chosen counties during the project period. They are required to ensure the timely prosecution of multiple offenders by adhering to a written policy that calls for the criminal circuit court to resolve or set a trial date for these cases within 120 days of defense counsel's appointment or retention.

DUI prosecutors should seek out and actively promote proven interventions that reduce DUI recidivism rates, such as DUI courts, victim impact panels, drug addiction programs, rehabilitation, transdermal alcohol monitoring, GPS tracking and monitoring, and ignition interlock devices.

## Countermeasure: Prosecution *(cont.)*

It is the goal of the DUI Training Department to meet these needs through two Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutors (TSRPs), accomplishing the following:

- Provide legal research and write articles for a quarterly newsletter.
- Provide seminars, training, meetings, a website, and a blog for prosecutors, along with information and consultation about impaired driving issues, and provide information to judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, legislators, and educators.
- Provide statewide training and education for prosecutors concerning traffic safety-related issues and the current legal environment, to improve their ability to prosecute vehicular crimes and thereby reduce the number of crashes caused by impaired drivers.
- Provide research, writing, and advice—including resource materials—to prosecutors across Tennessee to increase their effectiveness in prosecuting vehicular crimes.
- Provide training and education for law enforcement officers across Tennessee, improving their ability to investigate vehicular crimes, communicate effectively in court, and understand evolving traffic safety and vehicular crime issues.
- Provide legal updates, education, training, and advice to various organizations involved in traffic safety across Tennessee.

### Linkage Between Program Area

The swift prosecution of a DUI offense is critical for ensuring the motorist does not commit another offense while awaiting resolution of the existing charge, and that punishment is dispensed in a timely fashion. Studies indicate that a combined prosecution/treatment model is associated with lower recidivism rates and costs.

### Rationale

Under the Uniform Guideline for State Highway Safety Offices No. 8 (Impaired Driving), listed under III. Criminal Justice, D. Prosecution, States should implement a comprehensive program to visibly, aggressively, and effectively prosecute and publicize impaired-driving-related efforts, including the use of experienced prosecutors (e.g., traffic safety resource prosecutors), to help coordinate and deliver training and technical assistance to prosecutors handling impaired driving cases throughout the State. Countermeasures That Work, 11th Edition (NHTSA, 2023), Chapter 1, supports prosecution enhancements as an integral component of an effective impaired driving program.

### Funding Consideration

The THSO intends to fund prosecutor activities and continued education in multiple Tennessee Judicial Districts, along with TSRPs, to prosecute and publicize impaired driving-related cases on Tennessee roadways aggressively and effectively.

## Countermeasure: Prosecution *(cont.)*

### Estimated Budget

| FFY | Funding Source | Eligible Use of Funds | Estimated Amount |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2027 | 405d Impaired Driving Mid | Other Based on Problem ID (BIL) | $665,000 |
| 2028 | 154 Transfer Funds | Transfer Funds 154 | $6,900,000 |
| 2028 | 405d Impaired Driving Mid | Other Based on Problem ID (BIL) | $665,000 |
| 2029 | 154 Transfer Funds | Transfer Funds 154 | $6,900,000 |
| 2029 | 405d Impaired Driving Mid | Other Based on Problem ID (BIL) | $665,000 |
| | | **Total Over Three Years** | **$22,695,000** |

## Countermeasure: Adjudication

### Project Safety Impact

The judiciary is a separate, co-equal branch of government. While judges play an important role in reducing future criminal behavior by holding people accountable after conviction, they are not part of the prosecution team, and a Judicial Outreach Liaison (JOL) does not engage in activities that might be viewed as assisting the prosecutor in obtaining a conviction (Warren, 2007).

Tennessee's JOL program began in 2015, with the primary function of providing information to judges at all levels—Judicial Commissioners, Clerks, and Magistrates—concerning best practices in traffic safety. Such practices include instruction regarding the use of treatment courts, effective sentencing procedures, Fourth Amendment issues, new statutes, and case law reviews.

## Countermeasure: Adjudication *(cont.)*

The Tennessee Judicial Outreach Liaison (JOL) program works to address roadblocks that hamper effective outreach to the courts and to find alternative methods to address these issues, while collaborating with LELs and TSRPs to promote, strategize, and develop new approaches involving the criminal justice system as it pertains to impaired driving. The Tennessee JOL program has expanded to include a State JOL and regional JOL positions to broaden outreach capacity across the state. The State JOL develops a network of contacts with judges, judicial educators, State Drug Court Coordinators, and various professional organizations to provide educational materials and information supporting traffic safety, and serves on the state's Impaired Driving Advisory Council.

### Linkage Between Program Area

The goal of the JOL program is to help members of the judiciary gain quick and meaningful access to information about best practices, which can indirectly help reduce the number of drug and alcohol-related crashes and result in decreased injuries and fatalities in Tennessee. The State JOL regularly consults with the National Judicial Fellow and regional JOL positions, where filled, regarding the promotion of outreach efforts as they apply to impaired driving, and assists the THSO with program planning and strategies for outreach to judges and the courts. The JOL also works with LELs and TSRPs to help identify and assist in efforts that involve the criminal justice system as they relate to impaired driving.

### Rationale

NHTSA revised and released Best Practices for Implementing a State Judicial Outreach Liaison Program in March 2019, noting that each State has its own highway safety laws, judicial and political cultures, and leadership dynamics (Axel, et al., 2019). A joint agreement between NHTSA and the American Bar Association (ABA) implemented a successful JOL program nationally and regionally. Tennessee's own JOL allows for Tennessee-specific law to be incorporated into any training provided, along with building relationships with key stakeholders. Countermeasures That Work, 11th Edition (NHTSA, 2023), Chapter 1, identifies adjudication-related programming as a component of a comprehensive impaired driving program.

### Funding Consideration

The THSO intends to fund part-time positions of a JOL to help build relationships throughout the state and train members of the Tennessee Judiciary on multiple topics.

## Countermeasure: Adjudication *(cont.)*

### Estimated Budget

| FFY | Funding Source | Eligible Use of Funds | Estimated Amount |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2027 | 405d Impaired Driving Mid | Other Based on Problem ID (BIL) | $95,000 |
| 2028 | 405d Impaired Driving Mid | Other Based on Problem ID (BIL) | $95,000 |
| 2029 | 405d Impaired Driving Mid | Other Based on Problem ID (BIL) | $95,000 |
| | | **Total Over Three Years** | **$285,000** |

## Countermeasure: DUI/Drug Courts

### Project Safety Impact

Impaired driving is often a symptom of a larger alcohol or drug problem. Many first-time impaired driving offenders and most repeat offenders have alcohol or other drug abuse or dependency issues. These offenders are more likely to re-offend without an appropriate assessment and access to substance abuse treatment (Tennessee Impaired Driving Strategic Plan, FFY 2027–2029).

Traditional methods of dealing with impaired driving offenders have not successfully lowered crash rates or reduced the incidence of impaired driving. According to a 2007 study by The Crime and Justice Institute and the National Institute of Corrections, Community Corrections Division, sanctions alone will neither reduce recidivism nor result in positive behavioral change. At the same time, treatment alone may not provide the punishment or behavioral controls that are appropriate or necessary. An effective sentence should promote rehabilitation to reduce the risk of future victimization and threats to public safety.

# Countermeasure: DUI/Drug Courts *(cont.)*

## Project Safety Impact

DUI courts are specialized, comprehensive court programs that provide individual treatment, supervision, and accountability for repeat DUI offenders. These specialty courts follow the well-established drug court model. They are based on the premise that impaired driving can be prevented if underlying causes, such as substance use and mental health disorders, are identified and addressed. A large body of research supports the effectiveness of DUI courts in leading participants out of the justice system and into long-term sobriety. Research indicates that long-term treatment combined with judicial supervision can make a significant difference in recidivism among multiple offenders. Given Tennessee's data showing a dramatic rise in methamphetamine as a substance of abuse, DUI courts with robust treatment components are particularly critical.

## Linkage Between Program Area

DUI Court programs provide long-term treatment combined with judicial supervision. Hospital emergency department visits also present an opportunity for intervention that might prevent future arrests or motor vehicle crashes and result in decreased alcohol consumption and improved health. This countermeasure addresses both the alcohol-impaired and drug-impaired driving program areas, consistent with the 11th edition's structure.

## Rationale

Per Countermeasures That Work, 11th Edition (NHTSA, 2023), Chapter 1 (Alcohol-Impaired Driving) and Chapter 2 (Drug-Impaired Driving), DWI/DUI Courts are considered an effective countermeasure with a 4-star rating.

## Funding Consideration

It will be the intent of the highway safety office to fund a project with the specific purpose of monitoring impaired driving court proceedings.

## Countermeasure: DUI/Drug Courts *(cont.)*

### Estimated Budget

| FFY | Funding Source | Eligible Use of Funds | Estimated Amount |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2027 | 405d Impaired Driving Mid | Court Support (BIL) | $300,000 |
| 2028 | 405d Impaired Driving Mid | Court Support (BIL) | $300,000 |
| 2029 | 405d Impaired Driving Mid | Court Support (BIL) | $300,000 |
| | | **Total Over Three Years** | **$900,000** |

## Countermeasure: Communication (Media) – Impaired Driving Prevention

### Project Safety Impact

The THSO utilizes both earned and paid media as part of its integrated communications plan that works in tandem with the NHTSA Communications Calendar. This plan requires cohesive collaboration to reinforce Tennessee laws and change driver behavior. The THSO has engaged in a state interagency contractual agreement with Tennessee Technological University (TTU) to provide media buying, marketing, and advertising services. Services include feature design, production, purchasing, data collection, and administrative reconciliation. The primary services encompass the purchasing and creation of audio spots (radio and streaming), television (network and cable) time, social media, digital advertising (display, pre-roll, native, and Over-the-Top Television [OTT]), cinema ads, and Out-of-Home (OOH) to dispense various THSO traffic safety-related messages.

TTU employs a data-driven approach for media buys, utilizing statewide crash and fatality statistics to most effectively engage the primary target audience, males aged 18–34, thereby reducing fatalities, injuries, and associated economic losses resulting from traffic crashes.

## Countermeasure: Communication (Media) – Impaired Driving Prevention *(cont.)*

The THSO participates in several sports-related media partnerships, including contracts with private entities across the state, community events, professional sports teams, minor league baseball teams, motorsports venues, and other promotions statewide. The THSO will continue to identify additional public events attracting the target demographic during this plan period.

The THSO's earned media efforts are comprised of traditional news media, digital news media, and social media. The THSO builds a digital social media calendar monthly, populated with content based on the NHTSA communications calendar and supplemented with original content capitalizing on social media trends, upcoming events, and popular topics. All THSO press events are video recorded, uploaded to YouTube, and posted to social media. The THSO's TNTrafficSafety website serves as the primary digital resource hub.

### Linkage Between Program Area

The 'Booze It & Lose It' message will be utilized with enforcement activities during the Holiday and Labor Day campaign periods and will target the male 18–34 demographic group. The campaigns could include audio spots, television, social media, digital advertising, cinema ads, and OOH advertising. Outside of enforcement periods, the social norming message 'Fans Don't Let Fans Drive Drunk' is used for sport and event contracts. Earned media strategies are coordinated alongside paid media strategies and enforcement campaigns to optimize reach to the target audience. The THSO will also support local Hispanic communities by inviting Hispanic media outlets to local press events and sharing available Spanish marketing materials.

### Rationale

According to Countermeasures That Work, 11th Edition (NHTSA, 2023), Chapter 1, Mass Media Campaigns combined with enforcement are an effective strategy (3-star rating) for educating motorists and the public about the dangers of impaired driving. The 11th edition emphasizes that campaigns are most effective when coordinated with high-visibility enforcement.

## Countermeasure: Communication (Media) – Impaired Driving Prevention *(cont.)*

### Funding Consideration

The THSO plans to provide paid educational public service announcements with the message of reducing impaired driving in an effort to change social norms of high-risk demographics through a number of paid media contracts and a grant agreement through Tennessee Technological University.

### Estimated Budget

| FFY | Funding Source | Eligible Use of Funds | Estimated Amount |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2027 | 154 Transfer Funds | Paid Media | $2,500,000 |
| 2028 | 154 Transfer Funds | Paid Media | $2,500,000 |
| 2029 | 154 Transfer Funds | Paid Media | $2,500,000 |
| | | **Total Over Three Years** | **$7,500,000** |

## Countermeasure: Impaired Driving Enforcement

### Project Safety Impact

Enforcement is a strategy within Section 3 of Highway Safety Program Guideline No. 8, Criminal Justice System. All THSO alcohol grants for law enforcement activity require that participating officers be trained in Standard Field Sobriety Testing (SFST) at a minimum. Participating agencies coordinate their traffic patrols with other local safety activities and state and national mobilizations or waves of enforcement.

Saturation patrols are law enforcement efforts that combine a high level of sustained enforcement with intense enforcement mobilizations around the Memorial Day weekend (typically one of Tennessee's deadliest months for traffic fatalities), the July 4th weekend, Labor Day, and the December holiday period. Mobilizations are high-profile law enforcement programs combined with paid and earned media, and they are evaluated in terms of public awareness and changes in driver behavior.

## Countermeasure: Impaired Driving Enforcement *(cont.)*

Tennessee will organize a December holiday alcohol enforcement mobilization and a mid-summer traffic law enforcement mobilization concentrating on alcohol on 16 consecutive nights spanning three consecutive weekends by agencies serving at least 85 percent of the population. Agencies participating in the mobilizations will be required to maintain a high level of sustained enforcement by deploying monthly patrols combined with speed and other high-risk behavior enforcement efforts funded through the Police Traffic Services program.

Grant funds will be allocated for overtime enforcement conducted by officers trained and certified in SFST (required), Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement (ARIDE) (recommended), and Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) (recommended). Grant funds may also be allocated to purchase the supplies and equipment for DUI-related enforcement.

### Linkage Between Program Area

Highly visible impaired driving enforcement will be conducted at 'hot spot' locations identified through analysis of crash, citation, crime, and other data. This proven traffic safety approach combines highly visible and proactive law enforcement (e.g., saturation patrols, checkpoints, waves, multi-jurisdictional events) with visibility elements (e.g., roadside signage, marked vehicles, mobile command posts) and publicity (e.g., press releases, billboards, flyers, social media) that educates the public about the danger of impaired driving and increased enforcement of DUI laws to promote voluntary compliance.

### Rationale

Countermeasures That Work, 11th Edition (NHTSA, 2023), Chapter 1 (Alcohol-Impaired Driving), confirms that impaired driving enforcement continues to be highly effective. Publicized Sobriety Checkpoints maintain a 5-star rating and High-Visibility Saturation Patrols maintain a 4-star rating. These remain the foundation of Tennessee's impaired driving enforcement strategy. The 11th edition also notes that enforcement effectiveness is amplified when paired with publicized media campaigns, which the THSO coordinates through the Communications countermeasure described above.

## Countermeasure: Impaired Driving Enforcement *(cont.)*

### Funding Consideration

The THSO intends to provide grant funding for state and local law enforcement for the utilization of impaired driving saturation patrols, sobriety checkpoint projects, and HVE conducted in jurisdictions identified through data analysis as having a high occurrence of impaired driving-related fatal and serious injury crashes.

### Estimated Budget

| FFY | Funding Source | Eligible Use of Funds | Estimated Amount |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2027 | 154 Transfer Funds | Transfer Funds 154 | $8,750,000 |
| 2027 | BIL 405d Impaired Driving Mid | HVE (BIL) | $700,000 |
| 2028 | 154 Transfer Funds | Transfer Funds 154 | $8,750,000 |
| 2028 | BIL 405d Impaired Driving Mid | HVE (BIL) | $700,000 |
| 2029 | 154 Transfer Funds | Transfer Funds 154 | $8,750,000 |
| 2029 | BIL 405d Impaired Driving Mid | HVE (BIL) | $700,000 |
| | | **Total Over Three Years** | **$28,350,000** |

## Countermeasure: Court Monitoring

### Project Safety Impact

The Court Monitoring Program monitors misdemeanor DUI cases in the courts of the top ten DUI fatality counties. Monitors are physically present for court settings and acquire case information from courtroom observation and, when necessary, from researching online databases in the event a monitor is not able to be present at the proceeding.

## Countermeasure: Court Monitoring *(cont.)*

The Court Monitoring Program is designed and intended to create transparency within the judicial system, encourage accountability among court officials, educate the key individuals within the system, and support the officers enforcing the laws. The goal of the Court Monitoring Program is to analyze the criminal justice system to determine where breakdowns are occurring in the trials and adjudications of impaired driving defendants and to offer solutions. An additional goal is to partner with law enforcement to educate the general public on the dangers of impaired driving as a deterrent and to reduce impaired driving in Tennessee.

### Linkage Between Program Area

Court monitoring can help victims find a more victim-sensitive court system and ultimately help reduce the rate of repeat offenses and fatal crashes among DUI offenders. Partnering with law enforcement in this effort offers much-needed support to DUI prosecutors and law enforcement officers and encourages the court system to adjudicate impaired driving offenses in a tough and consistent manner.

### Rationale

Countermeasures That Work, 11th Edition (NHTSA, 2023), Chapter 1 (Alcohol-Impaired Driving), identifies court monitoring as an effective countermeasure (3-star rating). This countermeasure supports the enforcement and adjudication pipeline and provides transparency and accountability within the judicial system.

### Funding Consideration

The THSO intends to provide grant funding for agencies to monitor court proceedings to track and report on the outcomes.

## Countermeasure: Court Monitoring *(cont.)*

### Estimated Budget

| FFY | Funding Source | Eligible Use of Funds | Estimated Amount |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2027 | 154 Transfer Funds | Transfer Funds 154 | $120,000 |
| 2028 | 154 Transfer Funds | Transfer Funds 154 | $120,000 |
| 2029 | 154 Transfer Funds | Transfer Funds 154 | $120,000 |
| | | **Total Over Three Years** | **$360,000** |

## Countermeasure: Ignition Interlock Device Program

### Project Safety Impact

Ignition Interlock Devices (IIDs) are among the most effective tools available for preventing repeat impaired driving offenses. When properly administered and monitored, IID programs create a direct barrier between an impaired driver and the ability to operate a vehicle, reducing recidivism and protecting all road users. Ensuring that court-ordered IID requirements are enforced, that compliance is tracked, and that the program operates with integrity across the state are critical components of a comprehensive impaired driving strategy.

This countermeasure supports the administrative and oversight capacity necessary to maintain a credible and effective statewide IID program, including personnel and operational functions that keep the program running at scale.

# Countermeasure: Ignition Interlock Device Program *(cont.)*

## Linkage Between Program Area

Repeat DUI offenders represent a disproportionate share of alcohol-impaired driving fatalities and serious injuries in Tennessee. IID oversight directly supports the impaired driving program area by ensuring that court-ordered restrictions are enforced and that offenders are not able to circumvent program requirements. A well-administered IID program reinforces the deterrence effect of Tennessee's broader enforcement and adjudication strategies.

## Rationale

Per Countermeasures That Work, 11th Edition (NHTSA, 2023), Alcohol Ignition Interlocks are rated a 5-star countermeasure under Chapter 1, Alcohol-Impaired Driving, Section: Other Strategies for Behavior Change. Interlocks are highly effective in preventing vehicle operation by alcohol-impaired drivers and are supported by a substantial body of research demonstrating reductions in repeat DUI offenses. A well-administered statewide program, with consistent monitoring and compliance tracking, is essential to realizing the full deterrence benefit this countermeasure offers.

## Funding Consideration

The THSO intends to fund the Tennessee Highway Patrol's IID program oversight activities, including administrative support, compliance monitoring, and program coordination necessary to maintain the integrity of Tennessee's statewide ignition interlock program.

## Estimated Budget

| FFY | Funding Source | Eligible Use of Funds | Estimated Amount |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2027 | 154 Transfer Funds | Transfer Funds 154 | $70,000 |
| 2028 | 154 Transfer Funds | Transfer Funds 154 | $70,000 |
| 2029 | 154 Transfer Funds | Transfer Funds 154 | $70,000 |
| | | **Total Over Three Years** | **$210,000** |

# PROGRAM AREA:
# MOTORCYCLE SAFETY

## Problem ID

Motorcycle safety continues to be a key area of concern in Tennessee. The diversity of Tennessee's geography, from the Smoky Mountains in the east to the Mississippi Delta lands in the west, encourages motorcyclists and motorists alike to travel the state. Along with these scenic opportunities, the cultural, historical, social, and entertainment opportunities in Tennessee offer exciting destinations to meet everyone's taste. Tennessee is home to two major destinations for motorcycle riders: the Tail of the Dragon (shared with North Carolina) and the Best of the Snake (shared with Virginia).

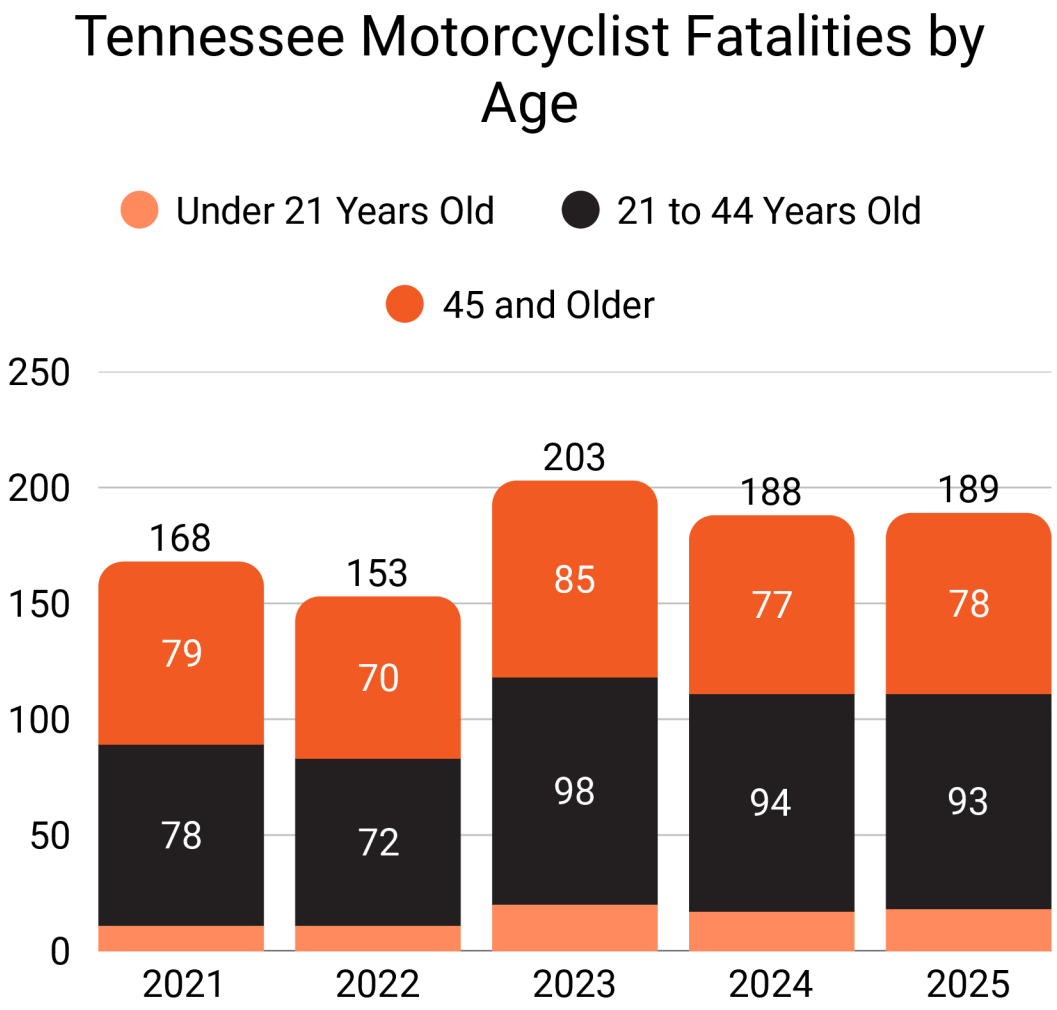
The Tail of the Dragon, U.S. Highway 129, is an 11-mile stretch of road with an incredible total of 318 curves. Along with the Tail of the Dragon, the Best of the Snake is a 37-mile section with 489 curves, traveling over three mountains and one valley. Both of these roadways are popular with motorcycle riders coming specifically to the area to ride the switchbacks and test their skills.

Nationally, motorcycle riders continue to be overrepresented in fatal traffic crashes. In 2024, there were 6,228 motorcyclists killed, representing 16 percent of all traffic fatalities — one of the highest totals recorded since at least 1975, according to NHTSA. Per vehicle miles traveled, motorcyclists were almost 27 times more likely than passenger car occupants to die in a motor vehicle crash that year (NHTSA, 2025).

> Motorcycle riders represent just a fraction of road users — but 16 percent of all traffic fatalities in 2024. That's 6,228 lives lost on roadways nationwide. (*NHTSA, 2025)*

Tennessee's data reflect this national concern. According to NHTSA state traffic safety information, motorcyclist fatalities in Tennessee have remained persistently elevated over the past five years, ranging from 153 in 2022 to a five-year peak of 203 in 2023 — a 33 percent increase from the prior year. Fatalities held at 188 in 2024 and 189 in 2025, according to TITAN, indicating no meaningful downward trend.

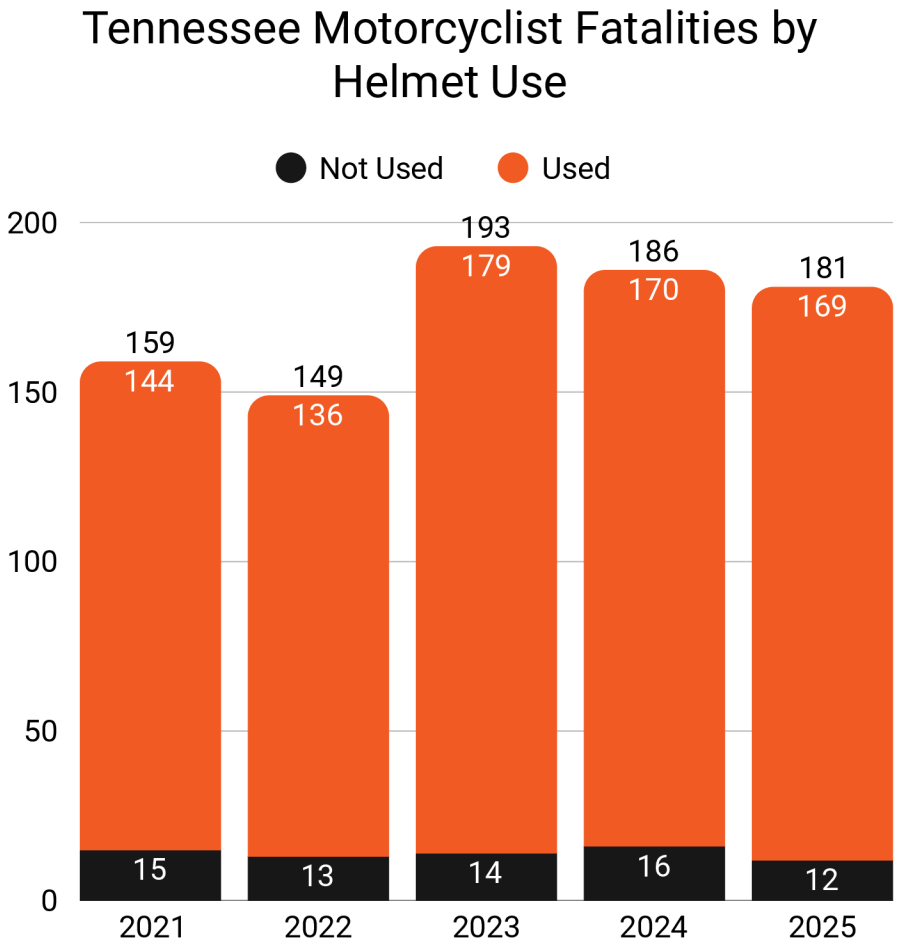
A motorcyclist is a combined reference to motorcycle operators and passengers. The table on the below provides an overview of motorcyclist fatalities in Tennessee by age from 2021 through 2025.




*Source: 2021 - 2024 data, NHTSA. State Traffic Safety Information. Online at https://cdan.nhtsa.gov/stsi.htm#, accessed 08 May 2026.*
*After 2024, TN Dept. of Safety and Homeland Security, TITAN Business Unit, 08 May 2026. (FTS)*

The 21 to 44 age group has consistently represented the largest share of motorcyclist fatalities, accounting for roughly 46 to 49 percent of total fatalities each year. Riders 45 and older represent a similarly significant share, reflecting that motorcyclist fatalities are not concentrated among young or inexperienced riders alone but span a broad adult population.

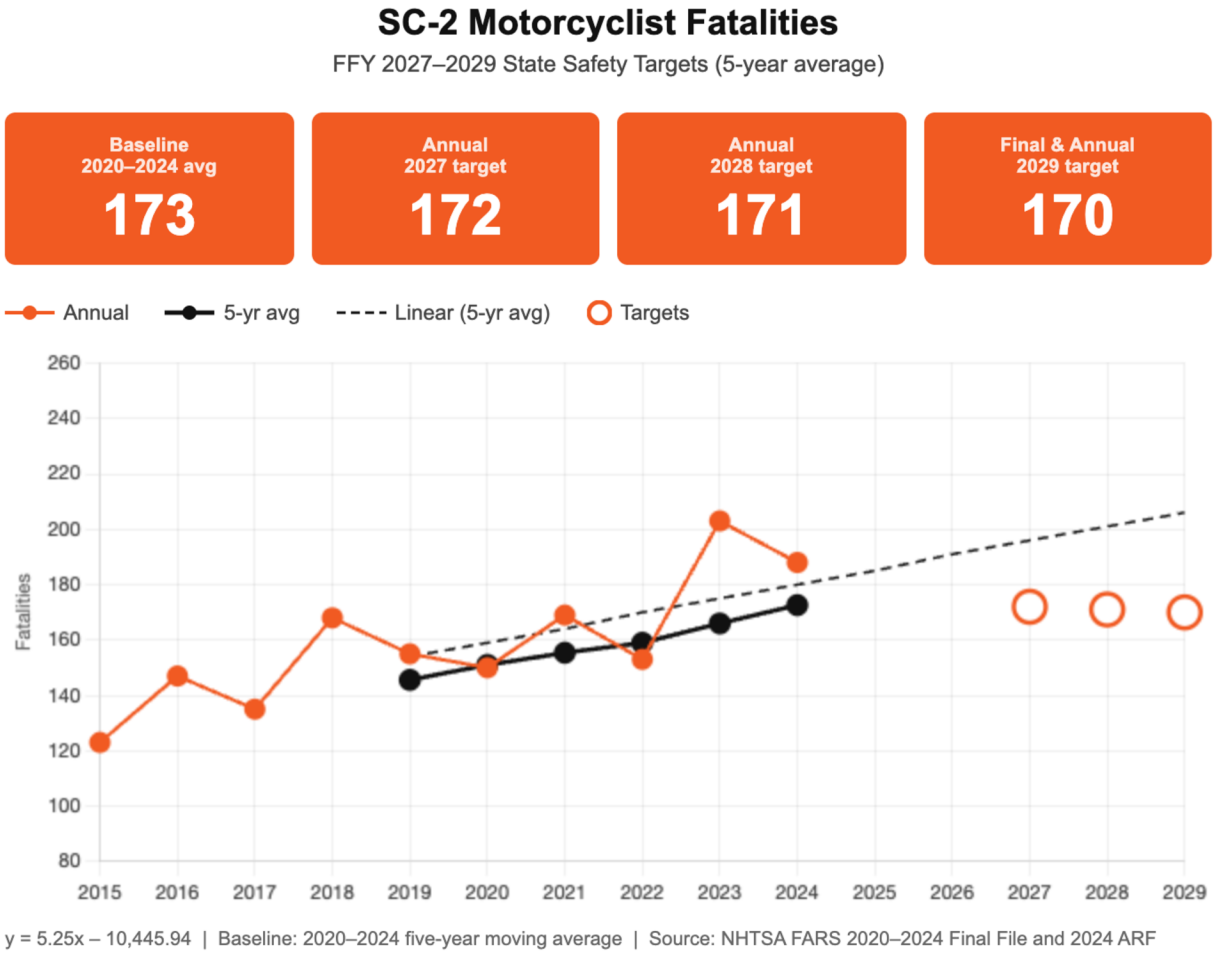
Tennessee law requires all motorcyclists to wear a helmet. The table below illustrates motorcyclist fatalities in Tennessee by helmet use from 2021 through 2025.




*Source:*
*2021 - 2024 data, NHTSA. State Traffic Safety Information. Online at https://cdan.nhtsa.gov/stsi.htm#, accessed 08 May 2026.*
*After 2024, TN Dept. of Safety and Homeland Security, TITAN Business Unit, 08 May 2026. (FTS)*

Despite the state's universal helmet law, un-helmeted fatalities continue to occur each year. In 2025, 12 of the 186 fatalities with known helmet status involved an un-helmeted rider. Notably, the majority of fatalities each year involve helmeted riders, which reflects the severity of crash forces involved rather than a compliance failure alone, and reinforces the importance of crash prevention through awareness and rider education as the primary strategy. Furthermore, motorcycle riders are sometimes observed wearing non-compliant DOT helmets that lack proven effectiveness, making it challenging for the state to accurately track all instances of non-compliance.

# Performance Target




While alternate baseline and linear trend analyses indicate an increasing trend in motorcyclist fatalities, it is the intent of the Tennessee Highway Safety Office to work against this trend and achieve a decrease in the five-year moving average number of motorcyclist fatalities from 172.6 (2020—2024) to 170 by December 31, 2029. This decrease will be accomplished, in part, through increased funding to highway safety provided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, expanded partnerships developed through the public participation and engagement process, and sustained motorcycle safety education and awareness efforts aligned with the integrated communications plan.

# Countermeasure Strategies

The following countermeasure strategies have been selected in accordance with 23 CFR Part 1300.11(b)(4), which requires each State to describe the countermeasure strategies that will guide program implementation and annual project selection in order to achieve the performance targets identified in this plan.

Each strategy presented below addresses a specific problem identified during the planning process and includes a description of the link between that problem and the selected countermeasure. Where applicable, countermeasures rated three or more stars in Countermeasures That Work, 11th Edition (NHTSA, 2023), recommended in a NHTSA-facilitated program assessment, or included in the Uniform Guidelines for State Highway Safety Programs are cited accordingly. For any countermeasure that falls outside those categories, supporting justification is provided to demonstrate the effectiveness of the proposed strategy.

All strategies described herein are grounded in Tennessee's current data, aligned with identified program area needs, and defensible under the federal requirements of 23 CFR Part 1300.

## Countermeasure: Communication (Media) — Motorcycle Safety

### Project Safety Impact

The THSO will utilize both media branches — earned and paid — as part of its integrated communications plan that works in tandem with the NHTSA Communications Calendar. This plan requires cohesive collaboration to reinforce Tennessee laws and change driver behavior. The THSO has engaged in a state interagency contractual agreement with Tennessee Technological University (TTU) to provide media buying, marketing, and advertising services in an effort to facilitate behavioral change. Services include feature design, production, purchasing, and administrative reconciliation to assist the state in informing and educating the public on traffic safety issues. The primary services encompass the purchasing and creation of audio spots (radio and streaming), television (network and cable) time, social media, digital advertising (display, pre-roll, native, and Over-the-Top Television [OTT]), cinema ads, and Out-of-Home (OOH) to dispense various THSO traffic safety-related messages.

## Countermeasure: Communication (Media) — Motorcycle Safety *(cont.)*

TTU will employ a data-driven approach for media buys utilizing statewide crash and fatality statistics to most effectively engage the target audience — males 25-54 years old — thereby reducing fatalities, injuries, and associated economic losses resulting from traffic crashes. The THSO will participate in several sports-related media partnerships and will partner with private entities across the state to deliver its messages at community events statewide. The THSO partners with Alliance Sport Marketing to identify events highly attended by the target demographic in data-supported, high crash and fatality counties to provide interactive displays where trained professionals can educate the public about motorcycle safety. Additionally, the THSO anticipates it will identify additional public events that attract the target demographic group during the lifespan of this document.

The THSO's earned media efforts are comprised of traditional news media, digital news media, and social media. The THSO will continue to pitch traditional news outlets like local radio, television, and print newspapers; however, the THSO will substantially increase digital communications and social media efforts as internet technology advances. The THSO often collaborates with traffic safety partners and community advocates to host press events during media campaigns. All THSO press events are video recorded, uploaded to YouTube, and posted to social media. The THSO website, TNTrafficSafety.org, is the primary resource for THSO's digital assets.

### Linkage Between Program Area

During Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month, the motorcycle awareness campaign will utilize the Look Twice for Motorcycles behavioral message targeting adults 25-54 years old. The campaigns will include audio spots (streaming), social media, digital (display, OTT, pre-roll, YouTube, etc.), and OOH (gas station advertising and billboards). The measure for advertising outreach will be within the goals and guidelines of frequency and reach set by NHTSA for national paid media campaigns. The areas targeted will utilize crash data and include the cities and counties with the highest motorcycle crash rates and raw numbers.

The THSO's earned media strategy for motorcycle safety will focus on education and awareness during spring and summer. In May, the THSO will promote its "Look Twice" campaign to remind motorists to look twice for motorcycles during Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month. Earned media messaging is coordinated alongside paid media messaging to optimize reach to the target audience. The THSO works with the TTU iCube to update educational materials with current data and information, update the THSO motorcycle safety webpage, and prepare motorcycle safety messaging for the THSO's May social media calendar. Additional motorcycle safety messaging may be included on THSO

## Countermeasure: Communication (Media) — Motorcycle Safety *(cont.)*

social media during warm-weather months to continue spreading awareness when motorcycles may be present. The THSO will also support local Hispanic communities by inviting Hispanic media outlets to scheduled press events and sharing available Spanish marketing materials.

### Rationale

According to Countermeasures That Work, Eleventh Edition, Communication Campaigns to Increase Motorist Awareness of Motorcyclists is categorized as an approach that is unproven or needs further evaluation. The limited evidence base for this countermeasure type is acknowledged; however, per 23 CFR §1300.25(m)(1)(iv), the allowable uses of 405(f) motorcyclist safety grant funds are limited to motorcyclist safety training and motorcyclist awareness programs. Public awareness, public service announcements, and other outreach programs to enhance driver awareness of motorcyclists — including "Share-the-Road" safety messages — are among the explicitly authorized uses under that section. As the eligible use of 405(f) funds is defined by federal regulation, the THSO's motorcycle safety media efforts are directed toward motorist awareness campaigns rather than direct rider outreach. Within these parameters, the THSO continues to promote Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month and the "Look Twice" campaign, which consistently ranks among the THSO's highest-performing media campaigns in public engagement and reach. The THSO remains committed to identifying innovative and creative approaches to change public behavior and protect motorcyclists on Tennessee roadways.

### Funding Consideration

The THSO intends to provide educational public service announcements with the message of reducing motorcyclist fatalities in an effort to change social norms of high-risk demographics through a paid media contract and a grant agreement through Tennessee Technological University, as well as to provide earned media opportunities with messaging to increase education and awareness about motorcycle safety in local communities across Tennessee.

## Countermeasure: Communication (Media) — Motorcycle Safety *(cont.)*

### Estimated Budget

| FFY | Funding Source | Eligible Use of Funds | Estimated Amount |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2027 | BIL 405f Motorcycle Programs | 405f Paid Advertising (BIL) | $100,000 |
| 2028 | BIL 405f Motorcycle Programs | 405f Paid Advertising (BIL) | $100,000 |
| 2029 | BIL 405f Motorcycle Programs | 405f Paid Advertising (BIL) | $100,000 |
| | | **Total Over Three Years** | **$300,000** |

# PROGRAM AREA: NON-MOTORIZED SAFETY

## Problem ID

Non-motorists are among the nation's most vulnerable population and a crucial safety component of the Vulnerable Road Users Emphasis Area Plan in the Tennessee Strategic Highway Safety Plan. Approximately 60,577 pedestrians were injured nationally in traffic crashes in 2021. Pedestrian fatalities across the nation rose sharply from 6,515 in 2020 to 7,388 in 2021, a 13.4 percent increase. In Tennessee, TITAN data showed that non-motorist fatalities reflected this spike, with an 18 percent increase in pedestrian fatalities and an overwhelming jump in pedalcyclist fatalities. Demographics show that, similar to 2024, approximately 2 out of 3 non-motorists in 2025 were male for both serious injuries and fatalities. This is a continuing trend from 2021.

> 57 percent of fatal and serious injury non motorist crashes occur in dark conditions

Tennessee pedalcyclist fatalities also spiked by 100 percent in 2022 and continue to remain high in 2023 and 2025, continuing a double-digit fatality trend. Additionally, the variability in Pedalcyclist fatalities remains high, making it more difficult to predict future outcomes. Spatial distribution for 2021-2025 shows that major Tennessee cities continue to see the bulk of fatal and serious injury non-motorist crashes, including Memphis, Nashville, Chattanooga, Knoxville, and (to a lesser extent) Johnson City. Time Factors are directly related to light conditions. This has been a consistent trend, with almost 2 out of 3 (57 percent) of fatal and serious injury non-motorist crashes in 2025 occurring in dark conditions. The peak time frame of fatal and serious injury non-motorist crashes occurs between 6 p.m. and 9 p.m. throughout the week, with the highest on Fridays from 6:00 p.m. to 8 p.m., and Saturdays from 9 p.m.

Safe road usage behaviors are the responsibility of both motorists and non-motorists. Both groups must never be impaired and should avoid distractions and maintain complete focus. They must obey all traffic signs and signals and always be aware of their surroundings. Motorists and non-motorists must look for and anticipate each other at all crosswalks and intersections, especially during dark conditions. Motorists must proceed cautiously and ensure that vehicle headlights are on, and non-motorists should wear reflective gear for higher visibility.

Impairment is shown to be involved with both. There were 60 impaired motorists and 177 impaired pedestrians in crashes in Tennessee in 2020. Non-motorists had a high rate of alcohol impairment through 2025, with 17 percent for fatally injured and 11 percent for fatally or seriously injured, similar to 2024. Similarly, drug positive test results of non-motorists jumped from 29percent in 2024 to 34 percent for fatal injuries. One (1) out of every 3 fatally injured non-motorists tested positive for the presence of an illegal or controlled substance at the time of death, similar to 2024.

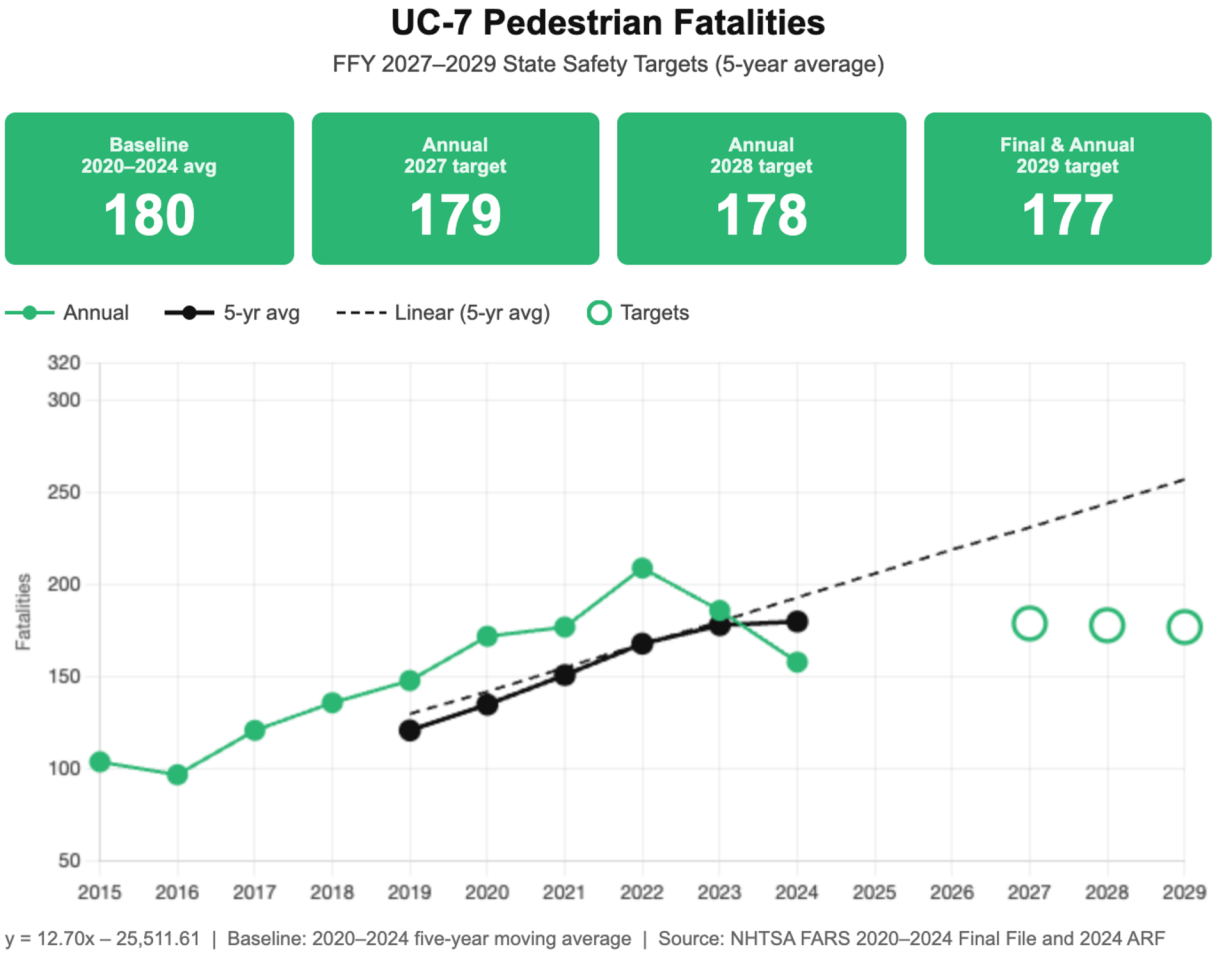
Road crossing behaviors are also factors in non-motorist involved crashes. In 2025 non-motorist serious injuries and fatalities reported show that 334 non-motorists crossed in the roadway rather than at the intersection, compared to 142 that crossed at the intersection.

Bicyclist injuries remain consistently, disproportionately high. In 2021, an additional estimated 41,615 bicyclists were injured. Over the last 5 years, estimated injury-only crashes averaged about 45,400 yearly.

Bicyclists, like motorcyclists, are not safeguarded by occupant protection measures found in passenger vehicles and face comparatively high exposure to injury risks in crashes on the roadway. In the absence of separate bike lanes, trails, or paths, bicyclists may be required to operate foot or low-powered electric bicycles on the roadway with vehicles. Bicyclists are also more susceptible to outdoor elements such as weather and road surface conditions.

> Safe road usage behaviors are the responsibility of both motorists and non-motorists.

# Performance Targets

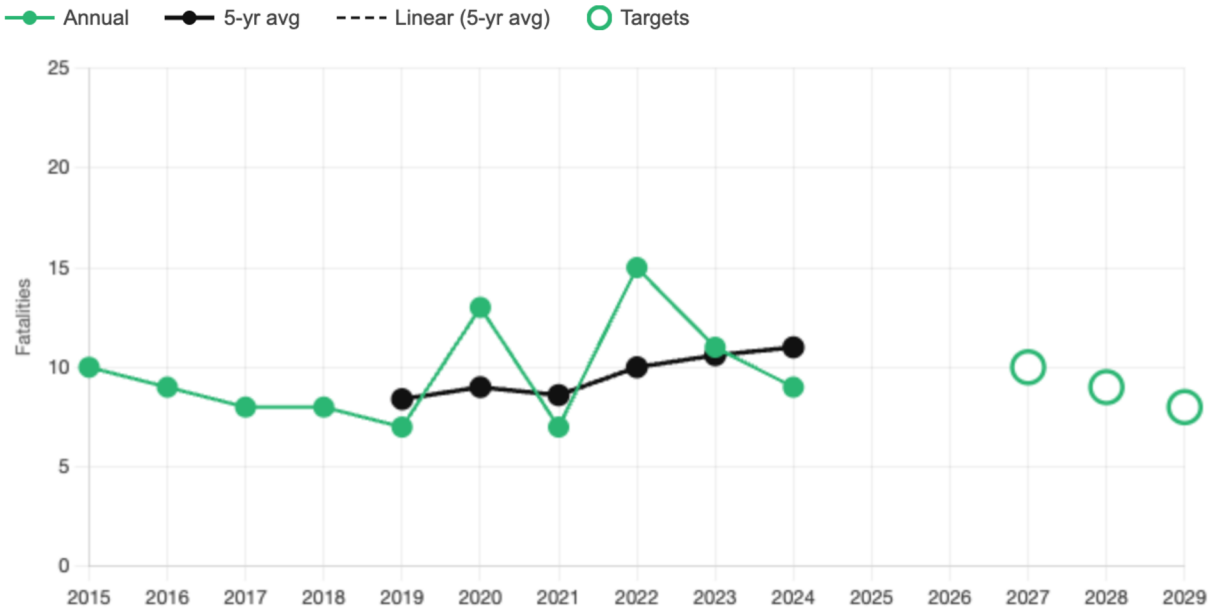



While alternate baseline and linear trend analyses indicate an increasing trend in speeding-related fatalities, it is the intent of the Tennessee Highway Safety Office to work against this trend and achieve a decrease in the five-year moving average number of speeding-related fatalities from 226.4 (2020—2024) to 223 by December 31, 2029. This decrease will be accomplished, in part, through increased funding to highway safety provided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, expanded partnerships developed through the public participation and engagement process, and sustained speeding-related education and enforcement efforts aligned with the integrated communications plan.

## SC-1 Bicyclist and Other Cyclist Fatalities

FFY 2027–2029 State Safety Targets (5-year average)

| Baseline 2020–2024 avg | Annual 2027 target | Annual 2028 target | Final & Annual 2029 target |
|---|---|---|---|
| 11 | 10 | 9 | 8 |




y = 0.55x – 1,099.34 | Baseline: 2020–2024 five-year moving average | Source: NHTSA FARS 2020–2024 Final File and 2024 ARF

While alternate baseline and linear trend analyses indicate an increasing trend in bicyclist and other cyclist fatalities, it is the intent of the Tennessee Highway Safety Office to work against this trend and achieve a decrease in the five-year moving average number of bicyclist and other cyclist fatalities from 11.0 (2020—2024) to 8 by December 31, 2029. This decrease will be accomplished, in part, through increased funding to highway safety provided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, expanded partnerships developed through the public participation and engagement process, and sustained non-motorist education and enforcement efforts aligned with the integrated communications plan.

# Countermeasure Strategies

The following countermeasure strategies have been selected in accordance with 23 CFR Part 1300.11(b)(4), which requires each State to describe the countermeasure strategies that will guide program implementation and annual project selection in order to achieve the performance targets identified in this plan.

Each strategy presented below addresses a specific problem identified during the planning process and includes a description of the link between that problem and the selected countermeasure. Where applicable, countermeasures rated three or more stars in Countermeasures That Work, 11th Edition (NHTSA, 2023), recommended in a NHTSA-facilitated program assessment, or included in the Uniform Guidelines for State Highway Safety Programs are cited accordingly. For any countermeasure that falls outside those categories, supporting justification is provided to demonstrate the effectiveness of the proposed strategy.

All strategies described herein are grounded in Tennessee's current data, aligned with identified program area needs, and defensible under the federal requirements of 23 CFR Part 1300.

## Countermeasure: Education Through Enforcement

### Project Safety Impact

The Tennessee Highway Safety Office (THSO) plans to partner with local law enforcement agencies in high-impact areas where non-motorist serious crashes and fatalities are rising. These agencies will utilize trained officers to provide enforcement through education to both motorists and pedestrians. Officers will be highly visible and will distribute educational materials to increase awareness and understanding of pedestrian and bicyclist safety. According to Countermeasures That Work, Eleventh Edition, enforcement campaigns are most effective when highly visible and well-publicized. The Eleventh Edition notes that enforcement should be aimed at both drivers and pedestrians and should be paired with communications and outreach efforts that announce and publicize the campaign through community meetings, media coverage, social media, and signage. Also factored in is the awareness of the general motoring public of the vulnerability of this population. Emerging issues in the Eleventh Edition further highlight that vehicle type, height, and weight play a

## Countermeasure: Education Through Enforcement *(cont.)*

role in crash outcomes involving pedestrians — light trucks, SUVs, and pickups make up an increasing proportion of the vehicle fleet and, on average, carry more force in crashes with pedestrians.

### Linkage Between Program Area

Due to the contributing spatial distribution factors cited, the THSO will award overtime-only education through enforcement grants to local law enforcement agencies in data-determined areas with high concentrations of pedestrian fatalities and serious injuries. The overtime activities consist of the distribution of educational materials to both motorists and pedestrians. This allows the enforcement officers to interact positively with the public while providing vital safety information.

Tennessee state pedestrian laws don't currently align with traditional enforcement methodology, so alternative methods must be utilized to reduce the injuries and fatalities of this vulnerable road user group.

### Rationale

Tennessee requested and received a Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety Program Technical Assessment (PBSPTA) through NHTSA in 2022. A national team of experts in Program Management, Enforcement, Engineering, Emergency Medical Services, and Education reviewed all components of the pedestrian and bicycle program, noted its strengths and accomplishments, and provided recommendations for improvements. Within the final assessment report, prioritizing high-visibility enforcement and community engagement was listed as a key recommendation within the enforcement section. The Tennessee Final PBSPTA Report includes a program overview and a list of recommended improvements for increased safety. A Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety Task Force was developed, and a consultant was hired to assist with the development of a strategic plan based upon these recommendations. This is an ongoing initiative.

### Funding Consideration

The highway safety office intends to fund local law enforcement agencies in data-determined areas with high concentrations of pedestrian fatalities and serious injuries to provide education through enforcement to both motorists and non-motorists on Tennessee roadways.

## Countermeasure: Education Through Enforcement *(cont.)*

### Estimated Budget

| FFY | Funding Source | Eligible Use of Funds | Estimated Amount |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2027 | BIL NHTSA 402 | Pedestrian/Bicycle Safety (BIL) | $150,000 |
| 2027 | BIL NHTSA 405d Mid | 405d Mid HVE (BIL) | $250,000 |
| 2027 | BIL NHTSA 405g | 405g Law Enforcement (BIL) | $75,000 |
| 2028 | BIL NHTSA 402 | Pedestrian/Bicycle Safety (BIL) | $150,000 |
| 2028 | BIL NHTSA 405d Mid | 405d Mid Other (BIL) | $250,000 |
| 2028 | BIL NHTSA 405g | 405g Law Enforcement (BIL) | $75,000 |
| 2029 | BIL NHTSA 402 | Pedestrian/Bicycle Safety (BIL) | $150,000 |
| 2029 | BIL NHTSA 405d Mid | 405d Mid Other (BIL) | $250,000 |
| 2029 | BIL NHTSA 405g | 405g Law Enforcement (BIL) | $75,000 |
| | | **Total Over Three Years** | **$1,425,000** |

## Countermeasure: Communication (Media) Non-Motorized Safety

### Project Safety Impact

The THSO will utilize both media branches (earned and paid) as part of its integrated communications plan that works in tandem with the NHTSA Communications Calendar. This plan requires cohesive collaboration to reinforce Tennessee laws and change driver behavior. The THSO has engaged in a state interagency contractual agreement with Tennessee Technological University (TTU) to provide media buying, marketing, and advertising services in an effort to facilitate behavioral change. Services include feature design, production, purchasing, and administrative reconciliation to assist the state in informing and educating the public on traffic safety issues. The primary services encompass the purchasing and creation of audio spots (radio and streaming), television (network and cable) time, social media, digital advertising (display, pre-roll, native, and Over-the-Top Television [OTT]), cinema ads, and Out-of-Home (OOH) to dispense various THSO traffic safety-related messages.

TTU will employ a data-driven approach for media buys utilizing statewide crash and fatality statistics to most effectively engage the target audience, all Tennesseans, thereby reducing fatalities, injuries, and associated economic losses resulting from traffic crashes.

The THSO's earned media efforts are comprised of the following: traditional news media, digital news media, and social media. The THSO will continue to pitch traditional news outlets like local radio, television, and print newspapers; however, the THSO will substantially increase digital communications and social media efforts as internet technology continues to advance.

The THSO often collaborates with traffic safety partners and community advocates to host press events during media campaigns. A press event is a tactic used to increase community support, personalize the enforcement message, localize the issue, and spread awareness for crash victims and families of crash victims. All THSO press events are video recorded, uploaded to YouTube, and posted to social media.

The THSO website, tntrafficsafety.org, serves as the primary resource for THSO's digital assets. The site provides Tennessee traffic crash data, THSO news and information, event calendars, educational resources, and more.

## Countermeasure: Communication (Media) Non-Motorized Safety *(cont.)*

In advance of every month, the THSO builds a digital social media calendar using a Google spreadsheet. This spreadsheet is populated with content based on the NHTSA communications calendar. The THSO also develops creative content to capitalize on social media trends, upcoming events, and popular topics. In addition, the THSO often uses social events to apply a relevant traffic safety message. Once approved by THSO management, all content within the social media calendar is scheduled to be posted via Hootsuite, a social media dashboard.

The THSO closely monitors its social media presence using the analytical tools provided by each platform. The THSO's most successful platforms are YouTube and Facebook. Social media reports are generated monthly and shared with the management team for review. This allows staff and management to know which content generated the most interest and engagement.

### Linkage Between Program Area

The pedestrian safety awareness campaign will utilize the Be Aware, Be Alert behavioral message during Pedestrian Safety Awareness Month. The campaigns will include social media, digital (display, OTT, pre-roll, etc.) and OOH (transit and billboards). The measure for advertising outreach will be within the goals and guidelines of frequency and reach set by NHTSA for national paid media campaigns.

Earned media efforts encompass the THSO's major topics, including bicycle and pedestrian safety. Each media campaign will be strategized to reach the appropriate target audience(s) during each campaign period. In doing so, the THSO will analyze Tennessee's media use and current population demographics to target messaging accurately.

### Rationale

The THSO elected to take part in a pedestrian and bicycle assessment during FFY 2023. Within the final assessment report, the communication plan for pedestrian and bicyclist safety is mentioned as part of the overall communication plan. It was determined that this approach was appropriate; however, more of a common statewide approach was determined to be needed by the assessment team instead of the targeted approaches with potentially different messages.

## Countermeasure: Communication (Media) Non-Motorized Safety *(cont.)*

### Funding Consideration

The THSO plans to provide paid educational public service announcements with the message of increasing pedestrian and bicyclist safety awareness in an effort to change the behaviors of both motorists and non-motorists through a number of paid media contracts and a grant agreement through Tennessee Technological University.

### Estimated Budget

| FFY | Funding Source | Eligible Use of Funds | Estimated Amount |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2027 | BIL NHTSA 405g | 405g Public Education (BIL) | $40,000 |
| 2028 | BIL NHTSA 405g | 405g Public Education (BIL) | $40,000 |
| 2029 | BIL NHTSA 405g | 405g Public Education (BIL) | $40,000 |
| | | **Total Over Three Years** | **$120,000** |

# PROGRAM AREA: DISTRACTED DRIVING

## Problem ID

NHTSA defines distracted driving as anything that diverts a driver's attention from the primary tasks of navigating the vehicle and responding to critical events. Distractions take a driver's eyes off the road (visual), mind off the task of driving (cognitive), or hands off the wheel (manual) — shifting focus away from driving and endangering the driver, passengers, and bystanders alike.

### Types of Distraction



**Visual Distraction**



**Cognitive Distraction**



**Auditory Distraction**



**Manual Distraction**

Common distractions include texting, cell phone use, talking to passengers, eating and drinking, grooming, reading, using a navigation system, watching a video, and adjusting the radio or Bluetooth controls.

These distractions fall into four categories. Visual distractions require the driver to look away from the roadway. Auditory distractions involve sounds unrelated to driving. Manual distractions require removing a hand from the steering wheel to manipulate a device. Cognitive distractions require the driver to think about something other than the driving task.

Cell phone use is among the most common and consequential distractions. Sending or reading a text takes a driver's eyes off the road for approximately five seconds — the equivalent of traveling the length of a football field at 55 mph with eyes closed. Text messaging simultaneously engages a driver's visual, manual, and cognitive attention, making it particularly dangerous.

According to NHTSA's Overview of Motor Vehicle Traffic Crashes in 2021, 3,522 distracted driving-related fatalities occurred that year (Stewart, 2023). Nationally, eight percent of drivers aged 15 to 19 involved in a distracted-affected fatal crash represent the largest share of any driver age group (NHTSA, n.d.). It is worth noting, however, that distracted driving fatalities are not limited to young drivers — of the more than 3,000 distracted driving deaths recorded in 2019, only nine percent involved drivers between the ages of 15 and 19 (Stewart, 2023).

Distracted driving in Tennessee remains a persistent concern. While the number of crashes and fatalities involving a distracted driver has decreased in recent years, continued effort is needed to further reduce these preventable incidents.

Tennessee Crashes and Fatalities Involving Distracted Drivers

| | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Crashes** | 24,688 | 22,845 | 20,778 | 12,154 | 12,055 |
| **Fatalities** | 85 | 70 | 63 | 66 | 40 |

*Sources*
*Crashes: TN Dept. of Safety and Homeland Security, TITAN Business Unit, 08 Jun 2026. (TITAN)*
*Fatalities: TN Dept. of Safety and Homeland Security, TITAN Business Unit, 08 Jun 2026. (FTS)*

Convincing drivers to avoid distractions is a persistent challenge. Many drivers treat activities such as eating, listening to the radio, or using a cell phone as routine parts of driving they are unlikely to abandon. NHTSA describes deaths and crashes attributed to distracted driving using the term "human choice" — the same framing applied to speeding, impaired driving, and failure to wear a seat belt — recognizing that behavioral change, not just enforcement, is central to addressing the problem.

Currently, 48 states and the District of Columbia have laws banning texting while driving, with 24 states enacting more restrictive hands-free requirements. Despite widespread adoption of these laws in recent years, a significant reduction in distracted driving crashes has not yet materialized (State Laws, n.d.).

Enforcement of distracted driving laws presents unique challenges for law enforcement officers. Since 2017, the THSO has conducted eight bus tours that give officers an elevated line of sight above standard vehicle height, allowing them to observe drivers holding or using phones. When a violation is spotted, officers radio ahead with the vehicle description

and tag number for citation issuance. These tours drew national recognition for their innovative approach and reinforced what data suggests — distracted driving is significantly underreported, in part because other violations such as impairment and speeding are more immediately detectable and life-threatening.

Tennessee's Hands-Free Law, enacted in July 2019, prohibits drivers from holding a cell phone with any part of their body while driving, and from sending or reading text messages or reaching for a phone in a manner that requires the driver to leave the seated position or become improperly restrained by a seat belt (Hands Free Tennessee, n.d.).

# Performance Target

# Countermeasure Strategies

The following countermeasure strategies have been selected in accordance with 23 CFR Part 1300.11(b)(4), which requires each State to describe the countermeasure strategies that will guide program implementation and annual project selection in order to achieve the performance targets identified in this plan.

Each strategy presented below addresses a specific problem identified during the planning process and includes a description of the link between that problem and the selected countermeasure. Where applicable, countermeasures rated three or more stars in Countermeasures That Work, 11th Edition (NHTSA, 2023), recommended in a NHTSA-facilitated program assessment, or included in the Uniform Guidelines for State Highway Safety Programs are cited accordingly. For any countermeasure that falls outside those categories, supporting justification is provided to demonstrate the effectiveness of the proposed strategy.

All strategies described herein are grounded in Tennessee's current data, aligned with identified program area needs, and defensible under the federal requirements of 23 CFR Part 1300.

## Countermeasure: Enforcement of Distracted Driving

### Project Safety Impact

According to NHTSA's Countermeasures That Work, 11th Edition, reducing distracted driving requires convincing or requiring drivers to pay closer attention to the driving task. This is challenging because many drivers consider activities such as eating or drinking, listening to the radio, or using a cell phone to be routine and necessary — and are unlikely to give them up. Research further indicates that drivers are generally poor judges of the performance decrements caused by distraction. As a result, behavioral strategies that promote awareness of distracted driving risks are strongly recommended, and communication paired with enforcement is essential to changing driver behavior.

## Countermeasure: Enforcement of Distracted Driving *(cont.)*

High-Visibility Cell Phone Enforcement targets drivers who use handheld devices by increasing the perceived risk of being cited. Law enforcement officers actively seek out cell phone users through dedicated roving patrols and techniques such as the spotter approach, where a stationary officer identifies a violator and radios ahead for citation issuance. Tennessee enacted the Hands-Free Law in July 2019, prohibiting drivers from holding a cell phone with any part of their body while driving. During April's National Distracted Driving Awareness Month, the Hands-Free Law is reinforced through coordinated enforcement and communication campaigns. Law enforcement agencies across the state align their local distracted driving strategies with this annual effort.

### Linkage Between Program Area

NHTSA's Countermeasures That Work, 11th Edition notes that results from three NHTSA demonstration projects focused on High-Visibility Enforcement combined with paid and earned media suggest these elements show promise in reducing handheld phone use and texting among drivers (Cosgrove et al., 2011). Distracted driving enforcement and communication work in partnership to change driver behavior. The THSO and its partnering agencies will continue highlighting NHTSA's safety guidance to the driving public to minimize distraction while driving.

### Rationale

High-Visibility Cell Phone Enforcement is an effective strategy with a four-star rating, as referenced in NHTSA's Countermeasures That Work, 11th Edition (2023).

### Funding Consideration

The highway safety office intends to fund law enforcement agencies to target distracted driving on Tennessee roadways.

### Estimated Budget

| FFY | Funding Source | Eligible Use of Funds | Estimated Amount |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2027 | BIL NHTSA 402 | Distracted Driving (BIL) | $255,000 |
| 2028 | BIL NHTSA 402 | Distracted Driving (BIL) | $255,000 |
| 2029 | BIL NHTSA 402 | Distracted Driving (BIL) | $255,000 |
| | | **Total Over Three Years** | **$765,000** |

# Countermeasure Strategies

The following countermeasure strategies have been selected in accordance with 23 CFR Part 1300.11(b)(4), which requires each State to describe the countermeasure strategies that will guide program implementation and annual project selection in order to achieve the performance targets identified in this plan.

Each strategy presented below addresses a specific problem identified during the planning process and includes a description of the link between that problem and the selected countermeasure. Where applicable, countermeasures rated three or more stars in Countermeasures That Work, 11th Edition (NHTSA, 2023), recommended in a NHTSA-facilitated program assessment, or included in the Uniform Guidelines for State Highway Safety Programs are cited accordingly. For any countermeasure that falls outside those categories, supporting justification is provided to demonstrate the effectiveness of the proposed strategy.

All strategies described herein are grounded in Tennessee's current data, aligned with identified program area needs, and defensible under the federal requirements of 23 CFR Part 1300.

## Countermeasure: Enforcement of Distracted Driving

### Project Safety Impact

According to NHTSA's Countermeasures That Work, 11th Edition, reducing distracted driving requires convincing or requiring drivers to pay closer attention to the driving task. This is challenging because many drivers consider activities such as eating or drinking, listening to the radio, or using a cell phone to be routine and necessary — and are unlikely to give them up. Research further indicates that drivers are generally poor judges of the performance decrements caused by distraction. As a result, behavioral strategies that promote awareness of distracted driving risks are strongly recommended, and communication paired with enforcement is essential to changing driver behavior.

# Countermeasure: Enforcement of Distracted Driving *(cont.)*

High-Visibility Cell Phone Enforcement targets drivers who use handheld devices by increasing the perceived risk of being cited. Law enforcement officers actively seek out cell phone users through dedicated roving patrols and techniques such as the spotter approach, where a stationary officer identifies a violator and radios ahead for citation issuance. Tennessee enacted the Hands-Free Law in July 2019, prohibiting drivers from holding a cell phone with any part of their body while driving. During April's National Distracted Driving Awareness Month, the Hands-Free Law is reinforced through coordinated enforcement and communication campaigns. Law enforcement agencies across the state align their local distracted driving strategies with this annual effort.

## Linkage Between Program Area

NHTSA's Countermeasures That Work, 11th Edition notes that results from three NHTSA demonstration projects focused on High-Visibility Enforcement combined with paid and earned media suggest these elements show promise in reducing handheld phone use and texting among drivers (Cosgrove et al., 2011). Distracted driving enforcement and communication work in partnership to change driver behavior. The THSO and its partnering agencies will continue highlighting NHTSA's safety guidance to the driving public to minimize distraction while driving.

## Rationale

High-Visibility Cell Phone Enforcement is an effective strategy with a four-star rating, as referenced in NHTSA's Countermeasures That Work, 11th Edition (2023).

## Funding Consideration

The highway safety office intends to fund law enforcement agencies to target distracted driving on Tennessee roadways.

## Estimated Budget

| FFY | Funding Source | Eligible Use of Funds | Estimated Amount |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2027 | BIL NHTSA 402 | Distracted Driving (BIL) | $255,000 |
| 2028 | BIL NHTSA 402 | Distracted Driving (BIL) | $255,000 |
| 2029 | BIL NHTSA 402 | Distracted Driving (BIL) | $255,000 |
| | | **Total Over Three Years** | **$765,000** |

# Countermeasure: Perceptual Study

## Project Safety Impact

Distracted driving remains a persistent safety concern on Tennessee roadways. Statewide crashes involving distracted drivers totaled 24,688 in 2021 before declining to 22,845 in 2022, 20,778 in 2023, and 12,154 in 2024. Fatalities followed a generally favorable trend, decreasing from 85 in 2021 to 63 in 2023, before a slight increase to 66 in 2024. Preliminary 2025 data reflects 12,055 crashes and 40 fatalities as of May 5, 2026 (TITAN, 2026).

The significant reduction in crashes between 2023 and 2024 is notable. While gradual declines in prior years may reflect increasing public awareness, improved enforcement, and advancements in vehicle safety technologies, the magnitude of the 2023 to 2024 reduction is unusually large and may also reflect changes in crash reporting practices, data coding, or distraction-related classification procedures. Additional investigation is needed to determine the extent to which this reduction represents a true behavioral change versus a methodological shift in data collection.

Cell phone use remains one of the most prevalent and consequential distractions on the road. Texting is particularly dangerous because it simultaneously imposes visual, manual, and cognitive demands on the driver — requiring all categories of distraction at once. Research indicates that even compared to a standard phone conversation, texting had the greatest negative impact on both safety and traffic flow (Jeihani et al., 2022). Young drivers under the age of 25 consistently represent a disproportionately high share of distracted driving crash involvements, accounting for approximately 23 to 28 percent of all distracted driving crash involvements annually.

Efforts to develop negative attitudes toward distracted driving at early ages are essential to producing more responsible adult drivers in the future. Research conducted through the University of Memphis targets young drivers in Shelby County through evidence-based methods designed to measure attitudinal and behavioral change over time.

## Linkage Between Program Area

The University of Memphis perceptual study examines the impact of repeated exposure to distracted driving safety messages on the attitudes and behaviors of young drivers. The study employs social media platforms to increase awareness of distracted driving and its consequences, and a mobile application to deliver push notifications reinforcing safe driving messages. The primary objective is to evaluate how repetitive exposure to targeted

## Countermeasure: Perceptual Study *(cont.)*

messaging affects attitudes and behavioral intentions over an extended period, generating comprehensive longitudinal data. Findings will inform the THSO's understanding of which messaging approaches are most effective with younger driver demographics and whether exposure to these messages corresponds with measurable reductions in distracted driving crashes in the study area.

### Rationale

Communications and Outreach on Distracted Driving is referenced in NHTSA's Countermeasures That Work, 11th Edition (2023), as an approach that needs further evaluation. NHTSA acknowledges that distracted driving communications and outreach campaigns face substantial obstacles in changing driver behavior, and that effectiveness has not been consistently demonstrated through rigorous evaluation. The University of Memphis perceptual study directly addresses this gap by applying neuroscience-informed methodology to measure attitudinal and behavioral outcomes among young drivers — a population consistently overrepresented in distracted driving crashes. This research aligns with NHTSA's own "U Drive. U Text. U Pay." campaign priorities and contributes to the growing evidence base needed to establish more effective communications countermeasures for this program area.

### Funding Consideration

The highway safety office intends to fund research entities to utilize evidence-based and neuroscience-informed methods to evaluate the effectiveness of distracted driving messaging among young drivers.

### Estimated Budget

| FFY | Funding Source | Eligible Use of Funds | Estimated Amount |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2027 | BIL NHTSA 402 | Distracted Driving (BIL) | $170,000 |
| 2028 | BIL NHTSA 402 | Distracted Driving (BIL) | $170,000 |
| 2029 | BIL NHTSA 402 | Distracted Driving (BIL) | $170,000 |
| | | **Total Over Three Years** | **$510,000** |

# Countermeasure: Communication (Media) - Distracted Driving

## Project Safety Impact

The THSO will utilize both earned and paid media as part of an integrated communications plan developed in alignment with the NHTSA Communications Calendar. This plan requires cohesive collaboration to reinforce Tennessee law and change driver behavior. The THSO has engaged in a state interagency contractual agreement with Tennessee Technological University (TTU) to provide media buying, marketing, and advertising services to facilitate behavioral change. Services include feature design, production, purchasing, and administrative reconciliation to assist the state in informing and educating the public on traffic safety issues. Primary services encompass the purchasing and creation of audio spots (radio and streaming), television (network and cable) time, social media, digital advertising (display, pre-roll, native, and Over-the-Top Television), cinema ads, and Out-of-Home advertising to disseminate THSO traffic safety messages.

TTU will employ a data-driven approach for media buys utilizing statewide crash and fatality statistics to most effectively engage the target audience of Tennesseans aged 18 to 39, with the goal of reducing fatalities, injuries, and associated economic losses resulting from traffic crashes.

## Linkage Between Program Area

The distracted driving awareness campaign will utilize the Hands Free Tennessee enforcement message during National Distracted Driving Awareness Month in April. The campaign targets teenagers and young adults aged 18 to 39 and will include audio spots (streaming), social media, and digital advertising (display, pre-roll, YouTube, and similar formats). Advertising outreach will be measured within the frequency and reach goals established by NHTSA for national paid media campaigns.

The THSO's earned media goal for distracted driving prevention is to utilize local partnerships, community outreach events, and digital platforms to increase awareness of the Hands Free Tennessee campaign. The THSO works with Tennessee Tech University iCube to update educational materials with current data, maintain the THSO's distracted driving webpage, and prepare distracted driving messaging for THSO's monthly social media calendars. This work supports local partners who utilize THSO resources to advocate for Hands Free Tennessee during community outreach events. Each April, the THSO promotes Hands Free Tennessee throughout National Distracted Driving Awareness Month and prepares press release templates for agencies conducting distracted driving education or enforcement activities. Distracted driving messaging is also shared on social media

## Countermeasure: Communication (Media) - Distracted Driving *(cont.)*

throughout the year to remind Tennesseans to drive hands-free, and the THSO shares photos and public service announcements created by grantees to amplify awareness. Spanish-language marketing materials are made available to support local Hispanic communities.

### Rationale

Communications on Outreach and Distracted Driving is referenced in NHTSA's Countermeasures That Work, 11th Edition (2023) as an approach that needs further evaluation. NHTSA acknowledges that the effectiveness of distracted driving communications and outreach campaigns has not been well evaluated and that these campaigns face substantial obstacles, noting that "communications and outreach by themselves rarely change driving behavior" and that stand-alone campaigns must be carefully pre-tested, communicate information not previously known to the audience, be long-term, and have substantial funding to have any meaningful impact (NHTSA, Countermeasures That Work, 11th Edition, 2023). The THSO's integrated approach — pairing paid media with earned media, aligning with the NHTSA Communications Calendar, and coordinating with enforcement activity — is designed to address these obstacles directly. By combining targeted demographic reach, repetitive exposure, and local community reinforcement, this campaign functions as a component of a comprehensive, multi-faceted program rather than a stand-alone communications effort, consistent with NHTSA's guidance on maximizing the potential impact of outreach-based countermeasures (NHTSA, Countermeasures That Work, 11th Edition, 2023).

### Funding Consideration

The THSO intends to provide educational public service announcements with the goal of reducing distracted driving and changing the social norms of high-risk demographics through a paid media contract and a grant agreement with Tennessee Technological University, as well as earned media opportunities to increase education and awareness about distracted driving in local communities across Tennessee.

### Estimated Budget

| FFY | Funding Source | Eligible Use of Funds | Estimated Amount |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2027 | BIL NHTSA 402 | Distracted Driving (BIL) | $40,000 |
| 2028 | BIL NHTSA 402 | Distracted Driving (BIL) | $40,000 |
| 2029 | BIL NHTSA 402 | Distracted Driving (BIL) | $40,000 |
| | | **Total Over Three Years** | **$120,000** |

# PROGRAM AREA:
# COMMUNITY TRAFFIC SAFETY

## Problem ID

ith an increasing need for data-driven initiatives, governmental and non-governmental organizations need to address their traffic injury problems locally to an ever-greater extent.

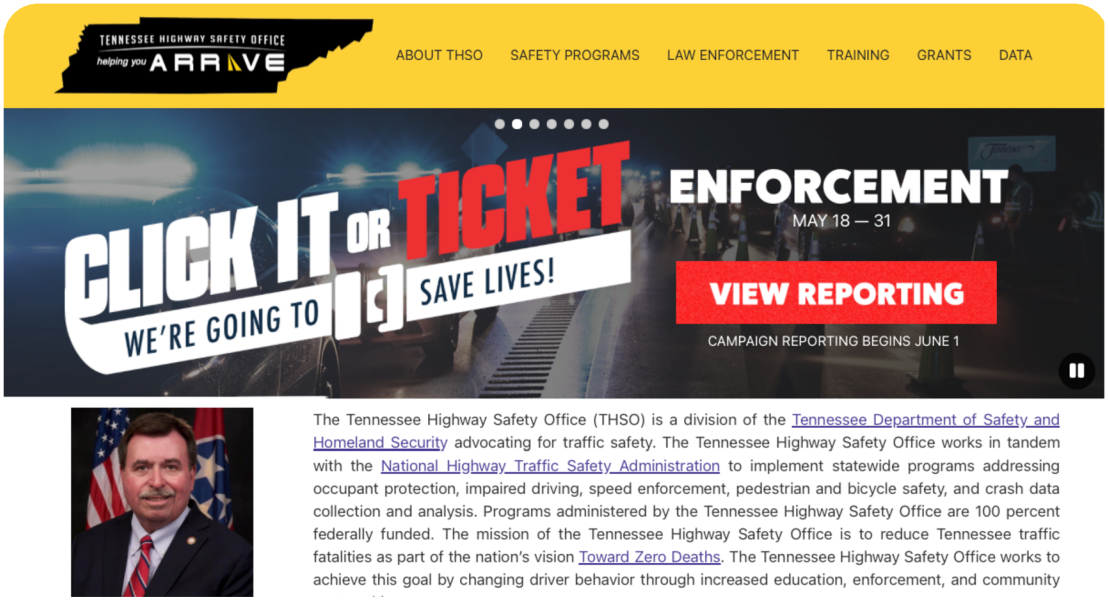
Long-term individual and community-based measures are crucial for addressing complex behavioral problems like drinking and driving that are determined by a myriad of cultural, lifestyle, and psychosocial factors.Single-strategy activities focused on the individual have been shown to be ineffective over the long term, particularly when compared with grassroots, community-based activities reflecting social attitudes about what behaviors are acceptable to other members of the community.

Community-level planning and activities permit a higher level of coordination and earned media than the traditional single-strategy approaches once favored in highway safety.When community leaders begin to consider who needs to be involved in their highway safety activities, they are often surprised by the interest and skills non-traditional partners bring to the table.

Tennessee's roadway fatalities continue to be a persistent concern, according to TITAN crash data. Through community education and programming, the severe injury and fatal crashes can hopefully be reduced through highly effective awareness events and programs.

Tennessee has four main metro areas, Nashville, Memphis, Knoxville, and Chattanooga, that have growing diverse populations. The Hispanic population has increased from 4.6 percent to 6.1 percent from the 2010 to 2020 census and will continue to grow (U.S. Census). The largest Hispanic populations are located in the urban and suburban areas of Shelby County (Memphis), Greater Nashville Area, Greater Knoxville Area, and Hamilton County (Chattanooga). There are 28,044 Native American/Alaska Natives in Tennessee, with the largest concentration in Shelby County and the Greater Nashville Area (U.S. Census).

The THSO is working to integrate market-savvy information into multiple-strategy social marketing campaigns, generally developed at the communitylevel, that not only get drivers'attention but also motivate them to change their behavior.






The Tennessee Highway Safety Office (THSO) is a division of the Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security advocating for traffic safety. The Tennessee Highway Safety Office works in tandem with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to implement statewide programs addressing occupant protection, impaired driving, speed enforcement, pedestrian and bicycle safety, and crash data collection and analysis. Programs administered by the Tennessee Highway Safety Office are 100 percent federally funded. The mission of the Tennessee Highway Safety Office is to reduce Tennessee traffic fatalities as part of the nation's vision Toward Zero Deaths. The Tennessee Highway Safety Office works to achieve this goal by changing driver behavior through increased education, enforcement, and community

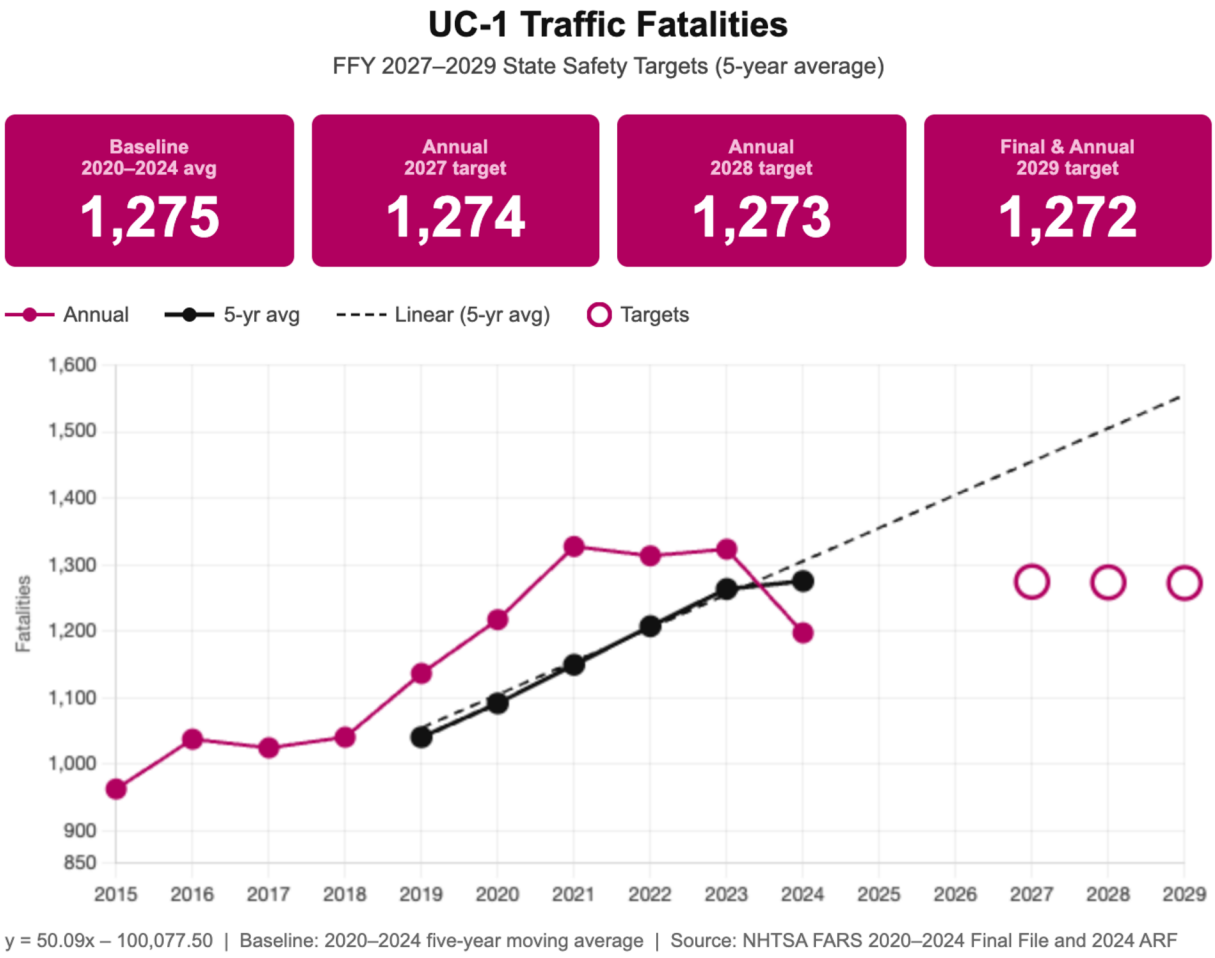



## OVERVIEW

Each school day, millions of children ride school buses. Did you know that the school bus is one of the safest vehicles on the road? Less than 1% of all traffic fatalities involve children on school transportation vehicles[Source]. However, children are more at risk when approaching or leaving a school bus. It's important for all drivers, as well as parents and students, to understand school bus safety.

*Source: NHTSA*

# Performance Target




While alternate baseline and linear trend analyses indicate an increasing trend in traffic fatalities, it is the intent of the Tennessee Highway Safety Office to work against this trend and achieve a decrease in the five-year moving average number of traffic fatalities from 1,275.4 (2020—2024) to 1,272 by December 31, 2029. This decrease will be accomplished, in part, through increased funding to highway safety provided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, as well as expanded partnerships developed through the public participation and engagement process. Efforts will include education, grant-funded enforcement activities, and advertising aligned with the integrated communications plan.

# Countermeasure Strategies

The following countermeasure strategies have been selected in accordance with 23 CFR Part 1300.11(b)(4), which requires each State to describe the countermeasure strategies that will guide program implementation and annual project selection in order to achieve the performance targets identified in this plan.

Each strategy presented below addresses a specific problem identified during the planning process and includes a description of the link between that problem and the selected countermeasure. Where applicable, countermeasures rated three or more stars in Countermeasures That Work, 11th Edition (NHTSA, 2023), recommended in a NHTSA-facilitated program assessment, or included in the Uniform Guidelines for State Highway Safety Programs are cited accordingly. For any countermeasure that falls outside those categories, supporting justification is provided to demonstrate the effectiveness of the proposed strategy.

All strategies described herein are grounded in Tennessee's current data, aligned with identified program area needs, and defensible under the federal requirements of 23 CFR Part 1300.

## Countermeasure: Traffic Safety Resource Center

### Project Safety Impact

The Tennessee Traffic Safety Resource Center works to implement communication and outreach programs to reach all different types of demographics to help increase driver awareness; this will, in turn, reduce the number of fatalities, injuries, and crashes. The center provides free resources for events and activities across the state in two languages.

There is an elementary education program, Ollie Otter, that visits schools to educate on the importance of seat belts, booster seats, distracted driving, and school zones. The events use a mascot program that provides a memorable experience in traffic safety to Kindergarten – 4th graders.

Reduce TN Crashes focuses on the high school demographics across the state to promote and educate with approved programs to discuss many different topics in traffic safety, including, but not limited to, seat belts, GDL, impaired driving, distracted driving, and proper driving behaviors.

# Countermeasure: Traffic Safety Resource Center *(cont.)*

## Linkage Between Program Area

There is an urgent need to continue the positive and coordinated THSO educational efforts through marketing and outreach programs to decrease the number of injuries and fatalities on all Tennessee roadways. Finding sustainable creative marketing and promotional strategies is essential for building effective relationships with the various target markets and Tennessee stakeholders.

Additionally, creating innovative marketing and outreach programs is crucial to lower injuries and fatalities and empower traffic safety stakeholders with the technology and resources. By using School-Based Programs, the intent is to impact multiple demographics in a concentrated effort to reach the students during learning/school hours.

## Rationale

Nearly every section of the NHTSA's Countermeasures That Work, Eleventh Edition, utilizes communication and outreach as an effective strategy. The following program areas have a communication and outreach component, as well as some areas not listed:

- Seat belts and child restraints,
- Speeding and speed management, and
- Distracted and drowsy driving.

## Funding Consideration

The THSO intends to fund the TennesseeTraffic Resource Center through an interagency agreement with Tennessee Tech University.

## Estimated Budget

| FFY | Funding Source | Eligible Use of Funds | Estimated Amount |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2027 | BIL NHTSA 402 | Safe Communities (BIL) | $1,050,000 |
| 2028 | BIL NHTSA 402 | Safe Communities (BIL) | $1,050,000 |
| 2029 | BIL NHTSA 402 | Safe Communities (BIL) | $1,050,000 |
| | | **Total Over Three Years** | **$3,150,000** |

# Countermeasure: Safe Communities

## Project Safety Impact

Safe Routes to School hopes to increase the amount of walking and bicycling trips to and from school – while engaging in safe and aware behaviors. Safe Routes to School looks to approach and address engineering, education, and enforcement on the roadways. By focusing on multiple facets of community safety programming (older drivers, CPS, and bicycle/pedestrian safety), agencies will educate safe roadway behaviors. Demonstrations such as Safety City, a mock neighborhood where students are able to practice safe walking and biking practices before attempting it in a real-world environment, help educate individuals on proper practices. Students are shown proper bicycling safety procedures, including helmet checks, tire pressure checks, bike fit, and the importance of reflective materials. Pedestrians will be educated on the roadway sign meanings, the importance of reflective materials, and how to properly use crosswalks.

## Linkage Between Program Area

Community traffic safety programs target diverse populations within the city and works on educating on safe walking/biking practices for better mobility in urban areas.

## Rationale

The Safe Communities concept began in Sweden in the mid-1970s when a community health care unit selected injuries as one of its projects for preventive health care. The objectives of the "accident" prevention project were to (1) reduce injury rates and eliminate causes of injuries; (2) motivate citizens to assume responsibility for injury prevention; (3) obtain program buy in and acceptance from citizens as well as local government and community institutions; and (4) evaluate program results through data collection on injuries as well as awareness and attitude surveys. In the American approach to the Safe Communities concept, the idea is to use the Safe Communities concept to initiate a new generation of community programs that address traffic-related injuries within the context of all injuries (Safe Communities: An Approach to Reduce Traffic Injuries, n.d.).

## Funding Consideration

It will be the intent of the THSO to fund agencies that educate people on multiple facets of highway safety.

## Countermeasure: Safe Communities *(cont.)*

### Estimated Budget

| FFY | Funding Source | Eligible Use of Funds | Estimated Amount |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2027 | BIL NHTSA 402 | Safe Communities (BIL) | $133,000 |
| 2028 | BIL NHTSA 402 | Safe Communities (BIL) | $133,000 |
| 2029 | BIL NHTSA 402 | Safe Communities (BIL) | $133,000 |
| | | **Total Over Three Years** | **$399,000** |

# PROGRAM AREA: POST-CRASH CARE

## Problem ID

The Department of Transportation defines the Safe System Approach as layers of protection and shared responsibility to promote a holistic approach to safety across the entire transportation system. “The key focus of the Safe System approach is to reduce death and serious injuries through design that accommodates human mistakes and injury tolerances.” The Safe System Approach includes five elements: safe road users, safe vehicles, safe speeds, safe roads, and post-crash care. Individuals involved in a serious injury crash rely on first responders to quickly treat and stabilize them on the scene by providing the best level of care possible before EMS transports them in a timely and safe manner to get any further care required.

**95**
Counties in Tennessee

**78**
Considered Rural

*Source: University of Tennessee Boyd Center for Business and Economic Research*

The Safe System Approach aligns with the mission of THSO to target zero roadway fatalities on our roads. The Boyd Center data makes Tennessee prominently a rural state outside of the metro areas, with more people moving to rural areas every day. For example, in 2022, there was an increase of 1.8 percent in population in rural areas compared to a 0.9 percent increase in 2021. As a result, more people are moving outside of the metro areas, which can lead to more drivers on rural roads.

## Trauma Center Network In Tennessee

### Level One

Chattanooga
Johnson City
Knoxville
Memphis
Nashville

### Level Three

Bristol
Kingsport
Gallatin
Smyrna
Dickson
Hermitage
Hendersonville
Knoxville
Lebanon
Nashville

### Level Four

Columbia

### Pediatric

Chattanooga
Knoxville
Memphis
Nashville

Having different levels of trauma centers located throughout the state allows emergency medical services to get a patient to the correct level of care quickly to reduce the risk of death.

While having Tennessee's Level One Trauma Centers spread throughout the state, it still takes a significant amount of time to transport an individual from a rural area to one of these centers. This timeframe makes the job of emergency medical services complex to get a severely injured person to the needed help within the golden hour.

## Average EMS Response Times

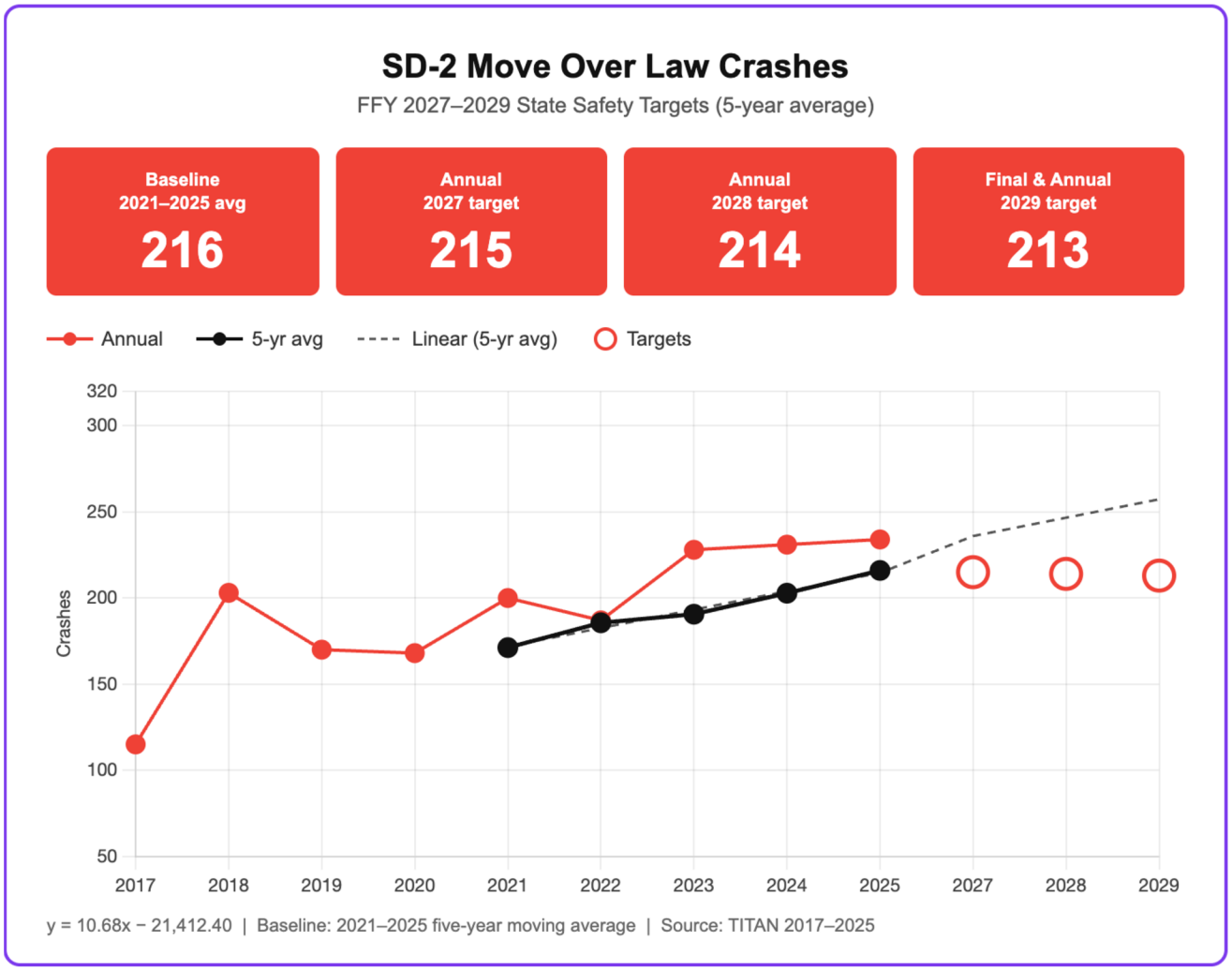
**~7 min**
**Urban**
response time

**~14+ min**
**Rural**
response time

**~30 min**
in one of ten cases

The golden hour is defined as the first 60 minutes after a traumatic injury (Resuscitation Outcomes Consortium Investigators). The Emergency Medical Services Response Times in Rural, Suburban, and Urban Areas report outlines, “Emergency medical service units average 7 minutes from the time of a 911 call to arrival on scene. That median time increases to more than 14 minutes in rural settings, with nearly 1 of 10 encounters waiting almost a half hour for the arrival of EMS personnel.” With Tennessee being mostly rural, it is imperative that first responders have the patient extricated from the vehicle and ready for care as soon as EMS units arrive on the scene. Following this, EMS units, depending on the severity of the crash, will then need to transport the patient to one of the level-one trauma centers that are staggered across the state. This transport time can range from 10 to 30 minutes or even longer. In the most severe of cases, and weather depending, it could even require a helicopter to transport the patient to the level of care needed to ensure the best outcome.

# Performance Target




While alternate baseline and linear trend analyses indicate an increasing trend in Move Over Law crashes, it is the intent of the Tennessee Highway Safety Office to work against this trend and achieve a decrease in the five-year moving average number of Move Over Law crashes from 216 (2021--2025) to 213 by December 31, 2029. This decrease will be accomplished, in part, through increased funding to highway safety provided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, as well as expanded partnerships developed through the public participation and engagement process. Efforts will include education, grant-funded enforcement activities, and advertising aligned with the integrated communications plan.

# Countermeasure Strategies

The following countermeasure strategies have been selected in accordance with 23 CFR Part 1300.11(b)(4), which requires each State to describe the countermeasure strategies that will guide program implementation and annual project selection in order to achieve the performance targets identified in this plan.

Each strategy presented below addresses a specific problem identified during the planning process and includes a description of the link between that problem and the selected countermeasure. Where applicable, countermeasures rated three or more stars in Countermeasures That Work, 11th Edition (NHTSA, 2023), recommended in a NHTSA-facilitated program assessment, or included in the Uniform Guidelines for State Highway Safety Programs are cited accordingly. For any countermeasure that falls outside those categories, supporting justification is provided to demonstrate the effectiveness of the proposed strategy.

All strategies described herein are grounded in Tennessee's current data, aligned with identified program area needs, and defensible under the federal requirements of 23 CFR Part 1300.

## Countermeasure: Post-Crash Care

### Project Safety Impact

This countermeasure addresses a critical gap in post-crash care capacity across Tennessee's rural communities. It's worth noting that the eleventh edition of Countermeasures That Work does not outline national performance measures for EMS. However, NHTSA's Office of Emergency Medical Services affirms that "For more than 50 years the Department of Transportation (DOT) has supported EMS system development. Saving lives following a motor vehicle crash depends on a well-trained, well-resourced EMS system providing the right care at the right time." By equipping rural fire departments with extrication tools, Tennessee can meaningfully reduce the time required to free victims from vehicles following serious crashes, directly improving survival rates and injury outcomes during the "Golden Hour" and aligning with the Safe System Approach outlined by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

# Countermeasure: Post - Crash Care *(cont.)*

## Linkage Between Program Area

Tennessee's predominantly rural geography presents unique challenges for emergency response. Many rural fire departments lack the financial resources to acquire and maintain vehicle extrication equipment, leaving first responders without the tools necessary to safely and efficiently remove crash victims from vehicles. Because rapid extrication is directly tied to patient survivability in serious injury crashes, providing funding for this equipment is essential to ensuring consistent, effective emergency response statewide. This investment aligns with the Safe System Approach by strengthening post-crash care infrastructure at the local level.

## Rationale

Highway Safety Program Guideline 11: Emergency Medical Services requires each state, in cooperation with its political subdivisions, to ensure that persons incurring traffic injuries or trauma receive prompt emergency care across the full range of emergency conditions. Implementing these projects will improve crash survivability and injury outcomes by enhancing emergency response availability, timeliness, and quality. Aligning with Guideline 11 also advances the Safe System Approach by ensuring that any driver involved in a serious injury crash receives timely, quality care and transport to the nearest appropriate level of Trauma Center within the Golden Hour.

## Funding Consideration

The highway safety office intends to fund projects that provide vehicle extrication equipment and related training opportunities to rural first responder agencies across Tennessee.

## Estimated Budget

| FFY | Funding Source | Eligible Use of Funds | Estimated Amount |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2027 | BIL NHTSA 402 | Emergency Medical Services | $100.000 |
| 2028 | BIL NHTSA 402 | Emergency Medical Services | $100.000 |
| 2029 | BIL NHTSA 402 | Emergency Medical Services | $100.000 |
| | | **Total Over Three Years** | **$300,000** |

# Countermeasure: Emergency Responder Roadside Safety Enforcement

## Project Safety Impact

First responders who arrive at crash scenes face a dangerous paradox — they are there to save lives while simultaneously putting their own at risk. As emergency personnel work roadside incidents, passing traffic presents a constant threat. A survey conducted by AAA, Roadside Workers Field Evaluation of Perceptions and Countermeasures, found that 15 percent of survey participants reported being struck while managing traffic incidents, and nearly 60 percent reported experiencing at least one near-miss while working roadside. Careless, inattentive, or impaired drivers were identified as the leading cause of injuries and fatalities to incident response personnel, with lack of situational awareness by other drivers as the second most significant contributing factor.

According to NHTSA, there were 143 roadside fatalities involving first responders across the United States in 2019. In Tennessee, five first responders lost their lives in roadside incidents that same year. Tennessee's Move Over Law requires drivers to move over or slow down when approaching stationary emergency vehicles, law enforcement vehicles, and other roadside workers with activated warning lights. Enforcement of this law is a critical mechanism for reducing the risk to those who serve on the front lines of crash response

## Linkage Between Program Area

Enforcement of the Move Over Law directly supports the Safe System Approach's post-crash care element by protecting the first responders who provide that care. When law enforcement agencies actively enforce Move Over violations, the public's awareness of the law increases and the perceived risk of a citation rises — the same mechanism that drives seat belt compliance. Enforcement activity also generates earned media opportunities that amplify the educational message beyond the enforcement event itself, extending reach to drivers who were not directly stopped. Keeping first responders safe on the roadside means keeping the post-crash care system functioning for every crash victim who depends on it.

## Rationale

Highway Safety Program Guideline 11: Emergency Medical Services requires that each state, in cooperation with its political subdivisions, ensure that persons incurring traffic injuries or trauma receive prompt emergency care. Protecting first responders at crash scenes is a foundational requirement for meeting that standard. While Countermeasures That Work, 11th Edition, does not offer program-specific guidance on Move Over Law enforcement, the Uniform Guidelines for State Highway Safety Programs supports enforcement of state and local motor vehicle laws as an effective strategy for improving roadway safety and protecting all road users, including those working in the roadside

## Countermeasure: Emergency Responder Roadside Safety Enforcement *(cont.)*

environment. Enforcement of the Move Over Law directly advances the Safe System Approach by reducing the threat to post-crash care providers and improving the conditions under which emergency response can occur.

### Funding Consideration

It is the intent of the THSO to fund local and state law enforcement agencies to enforce Tennessee's Move Over Law, increasing driver compliance and reducing the risk of injury and death to first responders and other roadside workers across the state.

### Estimated Budget

| FFY | Funding Source | Eligible Use of Funds | Estimated Amount |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2027 | BIL NHTSA 405h | 405h Law Enforcement (BIL) | $75,000 |
| 2028 | BIL NHTSA 405h | 405h Law Enforcement (BIL) | $75,000 |
| 2029 | BIL NHTSA 405h | 405h Law Enforcement (BIL) | $75,000 |
| | | **Total Over Three Years** | **$225,000** |

## Countermeasure: Communication (Media) — Emergency Responder Roadside Safety

### Project Safety Impacts

The THSO will utilize both earned and paid media as part of an integrated communications plan that works in tandem with the NHTSA Communications Calendar. This plan requires cohesive collaboration to reinforce Tennessee laws and change driver behavior. The THSO has engaged in a state interagency contractual agreement with Tennessee Technological University (TTU) to provide media buying, marketing, and advertising services to facilitate behavioral change. Services include feature design, production, purchasing, and administrative reconciliation to assist the state in informing and educating the public on traffic safety issues. Primary services encompass the purchasing and creation of audio

## Countermeasure: Communication (Media) — Emergency Responder Roadside Safety *(cont.)*

spots (radio and streaming), television (network and cable) time, social media, digital advertising (display, pre-roll, native, and Over-the-Top Television [OTT]), cinema ads, and Out-of-Home (OOH) advertising to deliver THSO traffic safety messages across the state.

TTU will employ a data-driven approach to media buys, utilizing statewide crash and fatality statistics to most effectively engage the target audience of all Tennesseans of driving age, with the goal of reducing fatalities, injuries, and the associated economic losses resulting from traffic crashes.

The THSO's earned media efforts encompass traditional news media, digital news media, and social media. The THSO will continue pitching traditional news outlets including local radio, television, and print newspapers, while substantially increasing digital communications and social media efforts as technology continues to advance. The THSO often collaborates with traffic safety partners and community advocates to host press events during media campaigns — a tactic used to increase community support, personalize the enforcement message, localize the issue, and elevate awareness for crash victims and their families. All THSO press events are video recorded, uploaded to YouTube, and shared across social media platforms.

The THSO website, TNTrafficSafety, serves as the primary hub for the agency's digital assets, providing Tennessee traffic crash data, news and information, event calendars, educational resources, and more. Each month, the THSO builds a digital social media calendar populated with content based on the NHTSA communications calendar, supplemented with creative content developed to capitalize on social media trends, upcoming events, and relevant topics. Once approved by THSO management, all content is scheduled for posting through Hootsuite. The THSO closely monitors its social media presence using platform analytics, with its most active channels being YouTube, Facebook, and X (formerly Twitter). Social media reports are generated monthly and shared with the management team to assess which content generated the most interest and engagement.

### Linkage Between Program Areas

The Move Over Law communications campaign is timed to coincide with periods of increased crash activity and targets all Tennesseans of driving age. Campaign elements include audio spots (streaming), social media, digital advertising (display, pre-roll, YouTube, and Waze), with outreach measured against the frequency and reach goals established by NHTSA for national paid media campaigns.

## Countermeasure: Communication (Media) — Emergency Responder Roadside Safety *(cont.)*

The THSO's overall earned media goal for roadside safety is to align education, awareness, and enforcement activity during scheduled campaign periods. The THSO works with Tennessee Tech University iCube to keep Move Over educational materials current, update the THSO website as needed, and prepare Move Over messaging for monthly social media calendars. Each year, the THSO will prepare Move Over Law press release templates for agencies conducting enforcement during the campaign period and may host a press event or produce a public service announcement to launch the campaign statewide. The THSO will also share photos and public service announcements created by grantees. The THSO will support local Hispanic communities by inviting Hispanic media outlets to press events and sharing available Spanish-language materials, with the intent to expand those resources as NHTSA develops additional Spanish-language content for state use.

Communications efforts in support of Move Over enforcement reinforce the broader goal of protecting post-crash care providers. Drivers who understand the law and perceive a genuine risk of a citation are more likely to comply, creating safer conditions for first responders and ultimately preserving the integrity of the post-crash care system for every crash victim they serve.

### Rationale

Countermeasures That Work, 11th Edition, does not offer program-specific guidance on Move Over Law education or work zone safety. However, the Uniform Guidelines for State Highway Safety Programs supports the education of drivers on the importance of state and local motor vehicle laws and safe driving practices as an effective strategy for improving roadway safety. Communications efforts that increase public awareness of the Move Over Law complement enforcement activity by raising the perceived consequences of non-compliance, which research consistently identifies as a driver of behavioral change.

### Funding Consideration

The THSO intends to provide paid educational public service announcements focused on reducing first responder roadside injuries through a paid media contract and a grant agreement with Tennessee Technological University, as well as to provide earned media opportunities to increase education and awareness about first responder and roadside worker safety in local communities across Tennessee.

## Countermeasure: Communication (Media) — Emergency Responder Roadside Safety *(cont.)*

### Estimated Budget

| FFY | Funding Source | Eligible Use of Funds | Estimated Amount |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2027 | BIL NHTSA 405h | 405h Public Education (BIL) | $40,000 |
| 2028 | BIL NHTSA 405h | 405h Public Education (BIL) | $40,000 |
| 2029 | BIL NHTSA 405h | 405h Public Education (BIL) | $40,000 |
| | | **Total Over Three Years** | **$120,000** |



# PROGRAM AREA: OLDER DRIVER

## Problem ID

Older driver safety is a significant concern in Tennessee, where 20 percent of licensed drivers involved in fatal crashes are over the age of 65 — three percent higher than the national average (NHTSA, 2023). By 2030, people 65 and older will outnumber those 18 and under for the first time in the United States. As a result, there will be more than 70 million people aged 65 and older, with 85 to 90 percent licensed to drive. This demographic shift will result in roughly 10,000 people reaching age 65 per day between 2010 and 2030 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023), increasing the percentage of the population aged 65 and older from 13 percent to 20 percent during that timeframe.

By 2030, Tennessee's older population is projected to represent 24 percent of the state's total population, exceeding the national average. According to the 2019 report from the Tennessee Commission on Aging and Disability (TCAD), seniors 65 and over will represent 20 to 30 percent of the population in 65 of the state's 95 counties. In 19 rural counties, older adults are projected to represent 30 to 40 percent of the local population. TCAD identifies those 60 and older as the fastest-growing demographic in Tennessee, with one third of that population living with a disability.

In Tennessee, where 17.6 percent of adults 65 and older participate in the labor force and 42.5 percent live alone, the decision to drive is frequently driven by necessity. Of the state's 95 counties, 78 are classified as rural. While limited transit options exist in some larger cities, transportation alternatives across the state remain scarce. This reality underscores the need for policies and programs that promote safe driving practices among older adults while also expanding access to alternative transportation options that support their mobility and independence.

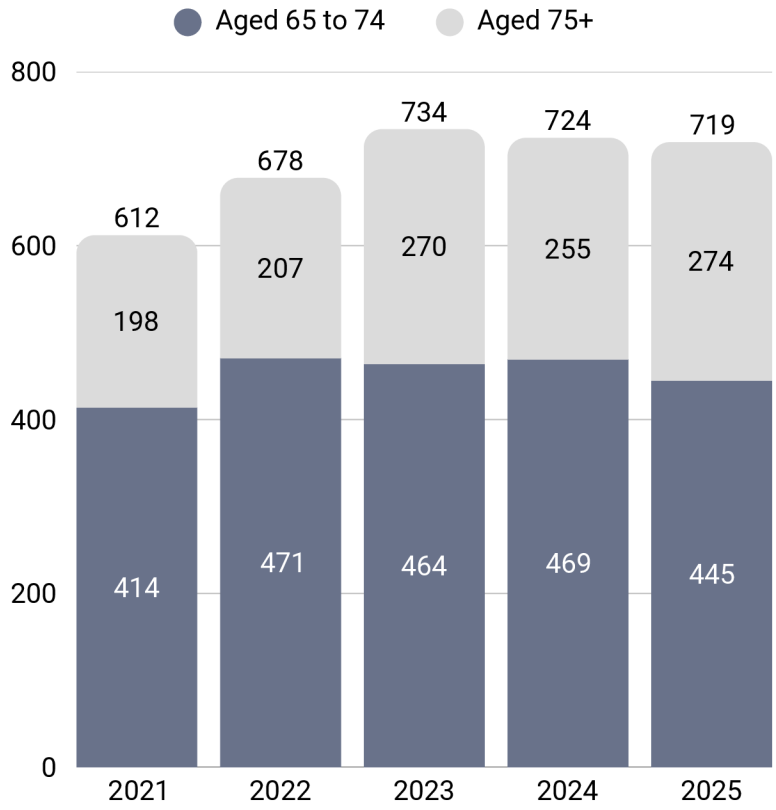
Tennessee's driver's license renewal process presents an additional challenge to ongoing driver fitness assessment. Renewals are generally required every eight years, with no re-testing requirement and the option to renew by mail or online. The state does not require a vision test during the renewal process, creating potential risk for older drivers and all other road users.

> Research suggests that older drivers are now outliving their ability to drive safely by an average of seven to ten years.

Research suggests that older drivers are now outliving their ability to drive safely by an average of seven to ten years. When physical or cognitive decline affects driving ability, older drivers are frequently left to make that determination themselves. In cases where a driver continues to operate a vehicle despite safety concerns, Tennessee law enforcement officers have limited authority to intervene. Through citations or arrests, officers may bring a driver before a judge, who can then order a re-evaluation. While both law enforcement and private citizens may request a driver assessment, compliance is not legally required.

Per mile traveled, fatal crash rates increase noticeably beginning at age 70 to 74 and are highest among drivers 85 and older. This elevated risk is largely attributable to older adults' increased susceptibility to injury — particularly chest injuries and medical complications — rather than a greater likelihood of being involved in a crash. As Tennessee's older population continues to grow, the number of older drivers involved in fatal crashes is expected to rise accordingly.

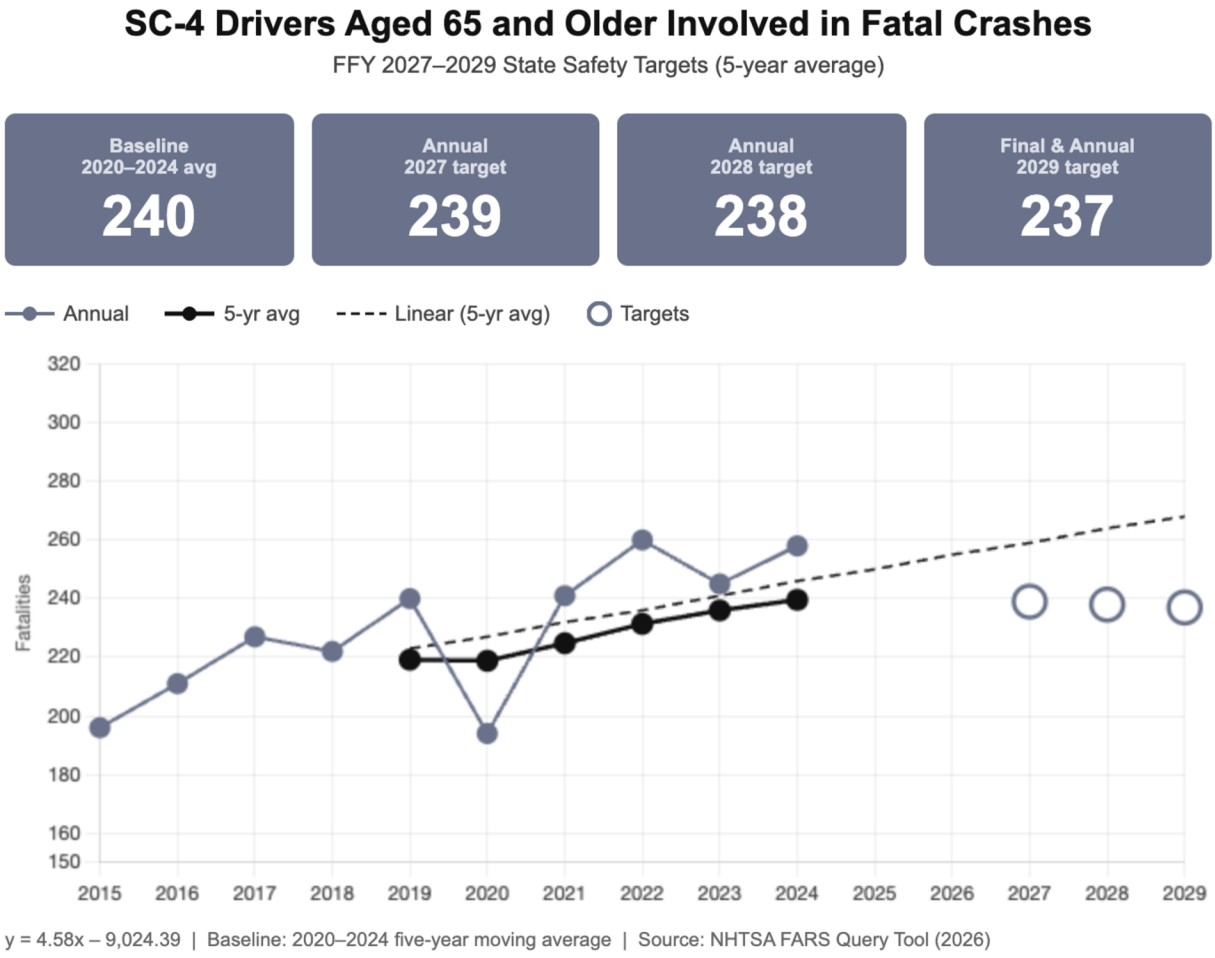
## Persons Age 65+ Seriously Injured in Tennessee Traffic Crashes




*Sources: TN Dept. of Safety and Homeland Security, TITAN Business Unit, 08 May 2026. (TITAN)*

Serious injuries among Tennesseans 75 and older increased 38 percent between 2021 and 2025

# Performance Target




While alternate baseline and linear trend analyses indicate an increasing trend in motorcyclist fatalities, it is the intent of the Tennessee Highway Safety Office to work against this trend and achieve a decrease in the five-year moving average number of motorcyclist fatalities from 172.6 (2020—2024) to 170 by December 31, 2029. This decrease will be accomplished, in part, through increased funding to highway safety provided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, expanded partnerships developed through the public participation and engagement process, and sustained motorcycle safety education and awareness efforts aligned with the integrated communications plan.

# Countermeasure Strategies

The following countermeasure strategies have been selected in accordance with 23 CFR Part 1300.11(b)(4), which requires each State to describe the countermeasure strategies that will guide program implementation and annual project selection in order to achieve the performance targets identified in this plan.

Each strategy presented below addresses a specific problem identified during the planning process and includes a description of the link between that problem and the selected countermeasure. Where applicable, countermeasures rated three or more stars in Countermeasures That Work, 11th Edition (NHTSA, 2023), recommended in a NHTSA-facilitated program assessment, or included in the Uniform Guidelines for State Highway Safety Programs are cited accordingly. For any countermeasure that falls outside those categories, supporting justification is provided to demonstrate the effectiveness of the proposed strategy.

All strategies described herein are grounded in Tennessee's current data, aligned with identified program area needs, and defensible under the federal requirements of 23 CFR Part 1300.

## Countermeasure: Law Enforcement Roles

### Project Safety Impact

According toCountermeasures That Work, enforcement plays three overall roles in improving the safety of older drivers.The first role law enforcement plays in keeping older drivers safe is traffic enforcement. Increasing seat belt use, maintaining speed limits, and enforcement of other behavioral driving actions has a positive impact on older drivers and occupants. While making traffic stops, law enforcement can both evaluate and interface with older drivers to identify potential physical or cognitive impairments. Lastly, officers provide topic-specific information to older drivers to help them prepare to drive safely. These resources can educate the older driver on making driving retirement plans, how to be effectively assessed for driving, or how to find community events or professionals that teach adaptive driving strategies to aging populations.

## Countermeasure: Law Enforcement Roles *(cont.)*

### Linkage Between Program Area

Law enforcement in Tennessee addresses older driver safety on the road by issuing citations, and occasionally arrests, based on driver activity. In addition to enforcing traffic safety on the streets, law enforcement officers can refer a driver for vision or medical assessments or Driver Services for a driving assessment. Officers also refer drivers to available local programs targeting older drivers, such as CarFit, Yellow Dot, and No-Zone Truck Safety, coordinated by community partners and volunteers. Tennessee also provides training for law enforcement officers to help them identify signs of medical impairment that may impact driving ability and understand the appropriate process for reporting concerns. Separate educational opportunities are available for caregivers and family members of older adults, providing tools to recognize dangerous driving behaviors and guidance on having conversations about transitioning away from driving when necessary.

### Rationale

Tennessee utilizes a multi-component approach to reduce the number of older drivers killed and seriously injured on state roadways. This countermeasure is drawn from the General Communications and Education strategy in NHTSA's Countermeasures That Work, 11th Edition (2023). NHTSA identifies this as an approach that needs further evaluation; however, the component activities supported under this countermeasure are individually grounded in published research and align directly with NHTSA's stated priorities for older driver safety programs.

Law enforcement training on the identification of medically impaired older drivers is supported by peer-reviewed research demonstrating measurable improvements in officer knowledge, confidence, and referral behavior following structured training. A study published in Injury Epidemiology (Meuser et al., 2016) documented significant gains in officer preparedness following a validated older driver identification curriculum delivered to more than 2,000 officers across multiple agencies. Further, a study of Virginia DMV referral outcomes found that 88 percent of drivers referred to licensing authorities by law enforcement following a traffic stop resulted in a license action, establishing law enforcement interaction as a demonstrably effective point of intervention for identifying medically at-risk drivers (Lococo, 2013).

Law enforcement interaction with older drivers — through traffic enforcement, roadside observation, and connection to community resources — is further supported by NHTSA's own Older Driver Program Five-Year Strategic Plan, which specifically identifies the need for

## Countermeasure: Law Enforcement Roles *(cont.)*

officers to have training and information to assess warning signs and understand referral procedures within their jurisdiction. NHTSA actively develops and distributes resources for law enforcement engagement with older drivers, underscoring federal recognition of this activity as a meaningful component of a comprehensive older driver safety program. CarFit events, delivered by trained volunteers and community partners, address the fit between older drivers and their vehicles as a documented safety concern. Research published in the Journal of Safety Research (Stav et al., 2011) found that 86 percent of CarFit participants received safety recommendations, and a significant proportion implemented vehicle adjustments following their event. CarFit is a nationally recognized program developed through a partnership of AARP, AAA, and the American Occupational Therapy Association, and has been documented in NHTSA-sponsored research as a community-based resource for older driver safety education and referral (NHTSA, DOT HS 813 457, 2023).

Taken together, these activities reflect a coordinated, multi-partner approach consistent with the research evidence and with NHTSA's demonstrated commitment to law enforcement training, community outreach, and vehicle safety education as components of an effective older driver safety program. Tennessee will continue to evaluate program outcomes to contribute to the growing evidence base for this countermeasure strategy.

### Funding Consideration

THSO intends to provide traffic enforcement, the collection and analysis of data, as well as community safety programs to older drivers to decrease fatal crashes and injuries through a combination of law enforcement and community grant agreements providing services and resources to this high-risk Tennessee demographic.

### Estimated Budget

| FFY | Funding Source | Eligible Use of Funds | Estimated Amount |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2027 | BIL NHTSA 402 | Community Traffic Safety Project (BIL) | $65,000 |
| 2028 | BIL NHTSA 402 | Community Traffic Safety Project (BIL) | $65,000 |
| 2029 | BIL NHTSA 402 | Community Traffic Safety Project (BIL) | $65,000 |
| | | **Total Over Three Years** | **$195,000** |

# PROGRAM AREA:
# YOUNG DRIVER SAFETY

## Problem ID

Motor vehicle crashes are a public health concern both in the United States and abroad. In the United States, motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of death, killing over 100 people daily (CDC, 2023). Motor vehicle crash injuries and deaths are preventable. According to CDC data, as of 2023, more than 44,000 people die annually in motor vehicle crashes in the United States, averaging over 120 deaths daily (CDC, 2023).

Nationally, the number of teen crashes and fatalities is increasing at an alarming rate. The CDC has used the term "epidemic" when referring to this trend. Per NHTSA (2024), over 2,116 young drivers ages 15-20 lost their lives in car crashes.

> About 2,800 teens ages 13-19 lost their lives in car crashes in 2020. That is an average of eight teens a day. (*CDC)*

About 2,800 teens ages 13-19 lost their lives in car crashes in 2020 (CDC, 2023), an average of eight teens a day (CDC, 2023). Teenagers have significantly higher crash rates than any other demographic. Crash risk is exceptionally high during the first months of licensure (CDC, 2023). Immaturity leads to speeding and other risky habits, and inexperience means teen drivers often do not recognize or know how to respond to hazards. Newly licensed teens have a crash rate per mile driven about 1.5 times higher for 16-year-old drivers than for 18-19-year-old drivers (CDC, 2023).

Teen drivers and passengers are particularly vulnerable on roadways due to several causative factors:

- Driver inexperience
- Driving with a teen or young adult passenger(s)
- Nighttime driving
- Not utilizing seat belts
- Distracted driving
- Drowsy driving
- Reckless driving
- Impaired driving
- Lack of driver education in schools and communities

Per mile driven, teen drivers ages 16-19 have a fatal crash rate almost three times as high as drivers ages 20 and older (CDC, 2023). Research also shows that the motor vehicle death rate for male drivers ages 16-19 was three times higher than for female drivers in the same age group in 2020 (CDC, 2023).

This epidemic of increasing teen crashes and fatalities carries a significant economic cost to Tennessee. Teens ages 15-19 accounted for $134 million in traffic death costs in Tennessee in 2018 — a staggering figure that covers only five years of drivers. Other age groups span 14 or more years, and yet this narrow age band accounts for nearly 10 percent of all traffic fatality costs in the state (CDC WISQARS, 2018).

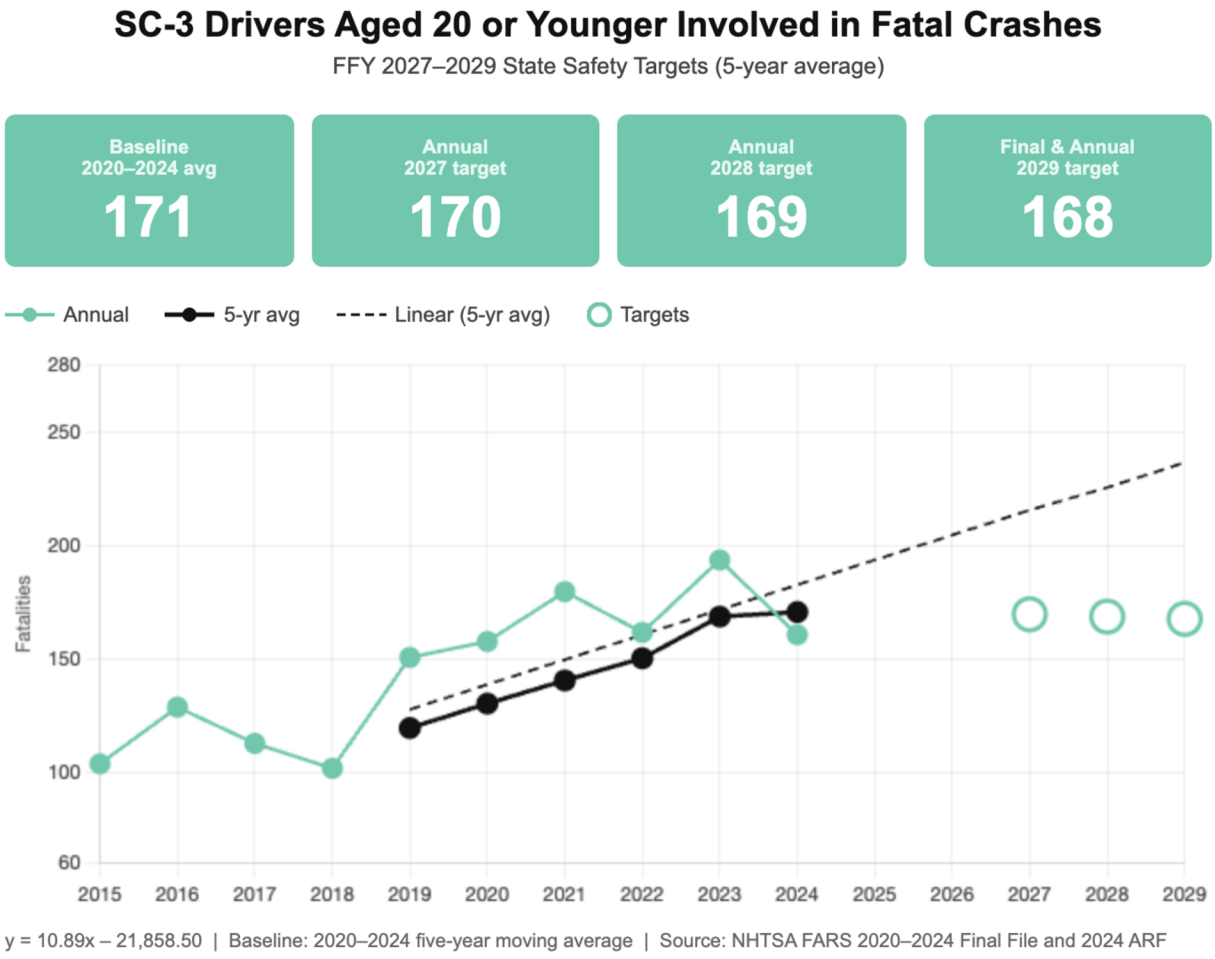
Tennessee has experienced some fluctuation in teen traffic fatalities and serious injuries in recent years. Despite any year-over-year decreases in fatalities, motor vehicle crashes remain the leading cause of teen death in Tennessee and across the nation (NHTSA 2022; CDC 2022). In 2025, Tennessee saw 61 teens between the ages of 15 and 19 killed on the roadways.

Persons Age 15 to 19 Seriously Injured in Tennessee Traffic Crashes

| | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Drivers** | 329 | 337 | 369 | 382 | 356 |
| **Others** | 225 | 272 | 274 | 233 | 224 |

*Source: TN Dept. of Safety and Homeland Security, TITAN Business Unit, 05 May 2026. (TITAN)*

# Performance Target




While alternate baseline and linear trend analyses indicate an increasing trend in motorcyclist fatalities, it is the intent of the Tennessee Highway Safety Office to work against this trend and achieve a decrease in the five-year moving average number of motorcyclist fatalities from 172.6 (2020—2024) to 170 by December 31, 2029. This decrease will be accomplished, in part, through increased funding to highway safety provided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, expanded partnerships developed through the public participation and engagement process, and sustained motorcycle safety education and awareness efforts aligned with the integrated communications plan.

# Countermeasure Strategies

The following countermeasure strategies have been selected in accordance with 23 CFR Part 1300.11(b)(4), which requires each State to describe the countermeasure strategies that will guide program implementation and annual project selection in order to achieve the performance targets identified in this plan.

Each strategy presented below addresses a specific problem identified during the planning process and includes a description of the link between that problem and the selected countermeasure. Where applicable, countermeasures rated three or more stars in Countermeasures That Work, 11th Edition (NHTSA, 2023), recommended in a NHTSA-facilitated program assessment, or included in the Uniform Guidelines for State Highway Safety Programs are cited accordingly. For any countermeasure that falls outside those categories, supporting justification is provided to demonstrate the effectiveness of the proposed strategy.

All strategies described herein are grounded in Tennessee's current data, aligned with identified program area needs, and defensible under the federal requirements of 23 CFR Part 1300.

## Countermeasure: Awareness and Education

### Project Safety Impact

Through collaboration with teen safety-focused grantees, statewide partners, school systems, and local law enforcement agencies, the THSO works to bring together youth and adult leaders to develop and sustain resources that support young drivers. Continued partnerships with statewide educational and awareness programs serve as a positive support network for teens who wish to influence how their peers act behind the wheel. Prospective grantees address numerous topics of concern for teen drivers, including texting while driving and substance use, through interactive programs and presentations.

The THSO utilizes technology to promote the ReduceTNCrashes website. ReduceTNCrashes is designed to increase awareness of safe driving practices among teens by facilitating and rewarding activities rooted in promoting teen traffic safety. The program combines innovative outreach and essential education to drive engagement in traffic safety activities across all public and private high schools throughout Tennessee. By providing teen crash

## Countermeasure: Awareness and Education *(cont.)*

rate data and a growing list of safe driving activities, ReduceTNCrashes raises awareness of the need for safe driving programs and gives students the tools to conduct crash-reduction activities in their own schools. Schools earn points for completing and submitting documentation of their participation.

Participation in ReduceTNCrashes activities supports young drivers in understanding Graduated Driver License (GDL) laws, the importance of driving distraction-free, wearing a seat belt, and the consequences of impaired driving. Since its inception in 2013, the program has offered over 248,000 students and young drivers the opportunity to participate in more than 1,457 highway safety campaigns and safe driving activities — ranging from speed-reduction campaigns to prom night peer safety programs. ReduceTNCrashes has awarded over 164 schools with bronze, silver, or gold recognition for their efforts. Peer-to-peer programming of this kind is highly effective at engaging students and promoting safer driving habits.

### Linkage Between Program Area

Teen driver education programs introduce young drivers to the new dangers they will face on the road. Making them aware of these dangers at an early and formative stage is a powerful deterrent and motivates safety-conscious decision-making. This education centers on the concept of choice — the decision to drive safely or to engage in risky behavior.

Examples of unsafe decision-making are brought to life through victim testimonials, 3D driving experiences, simulated driving on wet roads, pedestrian scenarios, high-speed situations, and impairment simulations. Awareness programs offer real-life roadway situations through virtual reality platforms, placing young drivers on actual roadways in their communities for better awareness, decision-making, and familiarity with the conditions they will face. Speed limit variations, environmental hazards, sharp curves, and quick-stop scenarios are practiced safely. Pre-and post-surveys conducted in conjunction with these programs consistently show increases in young drivers' awareness, confidence, critical thinking, and intention to make safer choices.

### Rationale

The THSO funds in FFY 2026 funded more than 16 educational and awareness grants specific to young drivers. Each grant was designed to promote safe driving choices and habits as young drivers gain experience on the road. During the 2024-2025 school year, approximately 955,000 young drivers across Tennessee were exposed to educational or awareness grant programs.

## Countermeasure: Awareness and Education *(cont.)*

Survey results conducted in conjunction with these education programs consistently identify impaired driving and distracted driving as two of the leading factors in teen driver crashes. Statewide grant-funded research and programming has produced measurable outcomes across Tennessee regions:

- In the Cumberland region, a distracted driving education program produced an 80 percent decrease in the number of students who reported a likelihood of texting while driving (pre-post survey, 583 students).
- In East Tennessee, an impaired driving awareness program resulted in a 74.6 percent decrease in the number of students who reported a likelihood of driving after drinking (pre-post survey, 662 students).
- In Middle Tennessee, a speeding-focused program resulted in a 48 percent decrease in the number of students who reported a likelihood of continuing to speed (pre-post survey, 909 students).

Research further supports the need for targeted programming. Nationally, 13,384 fatalities were attributed to alcohol-impaired driving in 2021, a 14.2 percent increase from 2020 (NHTSA). In Tennessee, 6,114 crashes were attributed to impaired driving in 2023, marking a significant increase since 2019. Studies have shown that teen drivers with primary vehicle access are 50 percent more likely to engage in a secondary task while driving compared to teens who share a vehicle (Gershon et al., 2017). That same research found that higher parental driving limitations are associated with lower rates of secondary task engagement, while greater susceptibility to peer influence is associated with higher rates. Young drivers spend nearly 400 percent more time with eyes off the road while texting in a simulator compared to non-distracted driving (Stavrinos et al., 2013), and self-reported data indicates nearly 75 percent of young drivers have texted while driving (Shaaban et al., 2020).

### Funding Consideration

It is the intent of the THSO to fund projects that will increase the young driver population's awareness of the dangers of deadly driving behaviors and educate them on the consequences of those choices.

## Countermeasure: Awareness and Education *(cont.)*

### Estimated Budget

| FFY | Funding Source | Eligible Use of Funds | Estimated Amount |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2027 | FAST Act NHTSA 402 | Teen Safety Program (BIL) | $720,000 |
| 2027 | 154 TransferFunds | 154 | $175,000 |
| 2027 | BIL 405d Impaired Driving - Mid | 405d Low Other Based on Problem ID (BIL) | $500,000 |
| 2028 | FAST Act NHTSA 402 | Teen Safety Program (BIL) | $720,000 |
| 2028 | 154 TransferFunds | 154 | $175,000 |
| 2028 | BIL 405d Impaired Driving - Mid | 405d Low Other Based on Problem ID (BIL) | $500,000 |
| 2029 | FAST Act NHTSA 402 | Teen Safety Program (BIL) | $720,000 |
| 2029 | 154 TransferFunds | 154 | $175,000 |
| 2029 | BIL 405d Impaired Driving - Mid | 405d Low Other Based on Problem ID (BIL) | $500,000 |
| | | **Total Over Three Years** | **$4,185,000** |