



# Safe Routes to School (SRTS) 2025 Grant Preparation: Creating Action Plans & Building Stronger Programs

April 2025



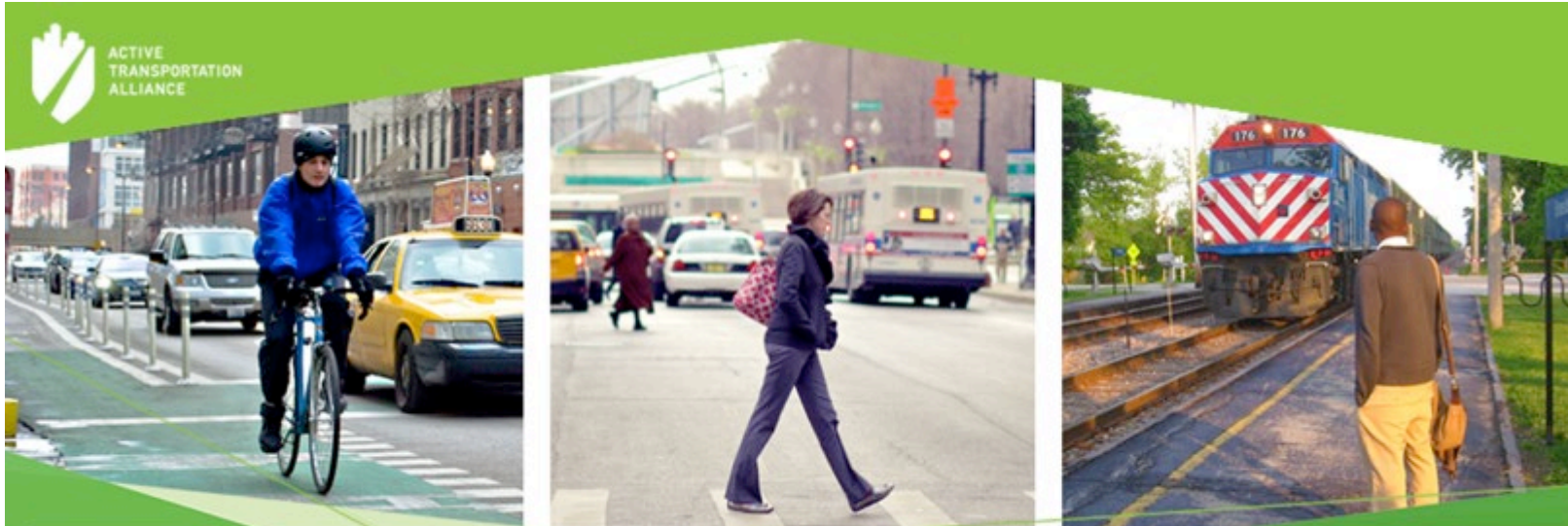
# Welcome!



- Webinar will be **recorded** and shared on [activetrans.org/srts](https://activetrans.org/srts)
- Participants are automatically **muted**
- Ask questions in **Q&A box**
- **Closed captioning** is available



# Active Transportation Alliance



**Maggie Czerwinski**  
Director of Community  
Building & Leadership

## Our Mission

To advocate for walking, bicycling, and public transit to create healthy, sustainable, equitable communities.

# ISPAN Program



## Technical Assistance through the Illinois State Physical Activity & Nutrition Program (ISPAN)

- Partnerships with Illinois Public Health Institute, funded by the CDC
- 3-part SRTS webinar series coming this summer!



*ISPAN is made possible with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and administered by the Illinois Public Health Institute in collaboration with partners in the Illinois Alliance to Prevent Obesity*





# SRTS grant teaser



- Safe Routes to School (SRTS) grant program is administered and managed by the **Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT)**.
- Funding from Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) + Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) to improve conditions for walking and biking to schools.
- Funding cycle every two years:
  - Call for proposals open **August 1 through early October, 2025**
  - **\$12 million** in funding available
  - **100% funded**



Illinois Department of Transportation



# ISPAN – Upcoming SRTS Webinar Series



- **Part 1 (July 16, 2025):** SRTS Grant Overview
- **Part 2 (August 20, 2025):** Application walk-through, Q&A with IDOT Staff
- **Part 3 (September 17, 2025):** Q&A with IDOT Staff



# ISPAN - 2025 SRTS Application Support



- As part of ISPAN, we are offering additional **1-on-1 SRTS application support** for 5 to 10 communities.
  - Application narrative review



# Agenda



- Building a local SRTS program
- Creating a simple action plan
- Resources



Image credit: Mike Cynecki



In 1969, nearly **50%**  
of all children walked or  
bicycled to school.

Today, just **13%** walk  
or bicycle.







## The Evidence is in: **Safe Routes to School Works**

- SRTS programs lead to **35% to 45% increase** in walking and bicycling to school
- SRTS programs result in a **45% to 75% decrease** in pedestrian injuries near schools
- Kids who walk and bike are **more physically active**



# Benefits of Safe Routes to School



## COMMUNITY CONNECTEDNESS

- Stronger student friendships & relationships through walking & biking together
- Positive social connections for families & neighbors



## CLIMATE BENEFITS AND CLEANER AIR

- Fewer student asthma attacks due to less driving & reduced air pollution results
- Cleaner air & reduced greenhouse gas emissions



## BETTER ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

- Better focus, improved concentration & less distraction for students who are active before school
- Fewer absences and less tardiness when students walk or bike in groups



## TRAFFIC SAFETY

- Reduced traffic injuries & dangers for students and community members at arrival & dismissal through street improvements near schools
- More chances to learn & practice road safety for students



## SAFETY FROM CRIME

- Increased safety from crime & violence due to more people on the streets, good lighting & better street design
- Less harassment, bullying, or violence when students walk or bike together or with adults



## SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION FIXES

- Solutions to reduced or non-existent bus service through Safe Routes to School
- Reduced traffic congestion at pick-up/drop-off times



## COST SAVINGS

- Household savings from reduced gas & car use
- Education budget savings through reduced student busing costs



## HEALTHIER STUDENTS

- Better health & stronger bones, muscles & joints through more walking & biking
- Reduced risk of chronic disease, diabetes, & obesity





# Steps to building a local SRTS program





# Steps to building a SRTS program



1. Bring people together
2. Hold a kick-off meeting
3. Gather information/identify issues
4. Identify solutions
5. Make an action plan
6. Apply for funding!



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# 1) Bring people together



- **Identify people** who want to make walking and bicycling to school safe and appealing
  - Single school, district-wide or another level
- **Look for existing groups:**
  - City or school district safety committee, PTA, school site council, pedestrian and bicycle advisory board
  - Otherwise, form an SRTS coalition



# 1) Bring people together



## Potential SRTS Coalition members:

### School

- Principal, other administrators
- Parents and students
- Teachers
- PTA/PTO reps
- Other

### Community

- Community members
- Neighborhood associations
- Local businesses
- Local advocacy groups
- Groups representing people with disabilities

### Local Government

- Mayor, council members
- Planners
- Transportation engineers
- Public health
- Law enforcement

## 2) Hold a kick-off meeting



### Goals of kick-off meeting

- Create a SRTS vision
  - e.g. more active children, safe walkways
- Gather feedback on desired SRTS programs
- Determine next steps
  - e.g. meet again, walk audit, create an action plan





# 3) Gather information/identify issues



## Observe walking and biking conditions for students

- Walking audit
- Bicycling audit
- Stakeholder interview

## How many kids walk/bike to school?

- Parent surveys\*
- Student in-class travel tally\*

Take a walk and use this checklist to rate your neighborhood's walkability.

### How walkable is your community?

Location of walk \_\_\_\_\_ Rating Scale: 1 2 3 4 5 6  
awful many problems some problems good very good excellent

**1. Did you have room to walk?**  
☐ Yes ☐ Some problems:  
☐ Sidewalks or paths started and stopped  
☐ Sidewalks were broken or cracked  
☐ Sidewalks were blocked with poles, signs, shrubbery, dumpsters, etc.  
☐ No sidewalks, paths, or shoulders  
☐ Too much traffic  
☐ Something else \_\_\_\_\_  
Locations of problems: \_\_\_\_\_  
Rating: (circle one) 1 2 3 4 5 6 \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Was it easy to cross streets?**  
☐ Yes ☐ Some problems:  
☐ Road was too wide  
☐ Traffic signals made us wait too long or did not give us enough time to cross  
☐ Needed striped crosswalks or traffic signals  
☐ Parked cars blocked our view of traffic  
☐ Trees or plants blocked our view of traffic  
☐ Needed curb ramps or ramps needed repair  
☐ Something else \_\_\_\_\_  
Locations of problems: \_\_\_\_\_  
Rating: (circle one) 1 2 3 4 5 6 \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Was it easy to follow safety rules?  
Could you and your child...**  
☐ Yes ☐ No Cross at crosswalks or where you could see and be seen by drivers?  
☐ Yes ☐ No Stop and look left, right and then left again before crossing streets?  
☐ Yes ☐ No Walk on sidewalks or shoulders facing traffic where there were no sidewalks?  
☐ Yes ☐ No Cross with the light?  
Locations of problems: \_\_\_\_\_  
Rating: (circle one) 1 2 3 4 5 6 \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Was your walk pleasant?**  
☐ Yes ☐ Some unpleasant things:  
☐ Needed more grass, flowers, or trees  
☐ Scary dogs  
☐ Scary people  
☐ Not well lighted  
☐ Dirty, lots of litter or trash  
☐ Dirty air due to automobile exhaust  
☐ Something else \_\_\_\_\_  
Locations of problems: \_\_\_\_\_  
Rating: (circle one) 1 2 3 4 5 6 \_\_\_\_\_

## 4) Identify solutions



**What can make it safer for students to walk or bike to school?**



## 5) Make an action plan



Develop an **action plan** with goals, planned activities, and timelines

- Engage stakeholders, community members



# 6) Apply for funding



## Apply for IDOT's Safe Routes to School (SRTS) grant this summer!

- Application period: August – early October 2025
- Attend IDOT's Special Programs Assistant Conference for application feedback
- Join our SRTS webinar series:
  - **Weds, July 16, 11am**
  - **Weds, Aug 20, 11am**
  - **Weds, Sept 17, 11am**







# Creating a SRTS action plan



# Action plans



- Creating an action plan will prepare you for IDOT's 2025 SRTS Grant Application.
- Use the Safe Routes Partnership **Action Plan Matrix Template.**
- Use national resources to help you develop ideas for your action plan.



# Action plan template



## ACTION MATRIX

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS	TIMELINE	IMPLEMENTATION LEAD	SUPPORTING PARTNERS	RESOURCES
<b>Program Structure, Operations, and Coordination</b>				
<i>Example:</i> 1. Establish a Safe Routes to School task force. Recruit members from the City, School District, County, individual schools, and community organizations. Meet quarterly to discuss program direction and coordinate activities.	2025-2026	City	School District	<u><i>Building Momentum for Safe Routes to School: A Toolkit for School Districts and City Leaders</i></u>
<b>Education</b>				
<i>Example:</i> 1. Expand in-class traffic safety education to cover both pedestrian and bicycle safety and reach multiple schools, with the <u>ultimate goal of providing in-class education at every school for multiple grades.</u>	2025-2026	School District	City	

# Engagement & Education

- **Classroom instruction**
  - [Ride Illinois Bike Safety Quiz](#)
  - [Lesson plans](#)
  - Integrate into curriculum
- **Parent University**
  - “How to Lead a Walking School Bus”
  - “Teaching your Child Pedestrian Safety”
- **Principal Newsletters**
  - Share walking routes, crossing guard locations, safety tips, etc.
- **Crossing guards**
  - High quality training
  - Student safety patrol



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# Encouragement

- **Walk, Bike, and Roll to School Day**
  - May & October
  - Walking Wednesdays
- **Walking School Buses & Bike Trains**
- **Bike Rodeos**
- **Remote Drop-off/Pick Up**
  - Create a Park & Walk Program
- **Early dismissal** for students who walk or bike to school



# Encouragement



- Celebrate **Crossing Guard Appreciation Day**
- Walking/Biking **Mileage Challenge**
  - Golden Shoe Award
- **Traffic gardens**
- Distribute Preferred Walking & Biking **Route Maps**



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# Traffic gardens





# Suggested Walking and Biking Routes | Village of Glencoe



# Suggested Walking and Biking Routes | West School



- Crossing Guard
- Traffic Signal
- 4-Way Stop Sign
- 3-Way Stop Sign
- 2-Way Stop Sign
- Primary Route
- Secondary Route

- Crossing Guard
- Traffic Signal
- Stop Sign
- Primary Route
- Secondary Route
- Off-Street Path

0 0.05 0.1 Miles






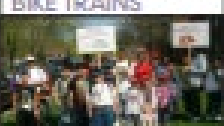

# Engineering

- Safer crossings
- Traffic calming
- Eliminating sidewalk gaps
- Signage
- Complete streets



# Collecting ideas



Encouragement Activities	High Priority	Low Priority	Not Applicable	How to Implement? (Ideas, Who to Involve, Timeline)
REMOTE DROP-OFF 				
INTERNATIONAL WALK/BIKE TO SCHOOL DAY 				
TEACHER COMPETITIONS/ INCENTIVES 				
WALKING SCHOOL BUSES/ BIKE TRAINS 				
TRACK MILES/ TRIPS 				

- Create a poster with ideas where people can vote with stickers
- Key stakeholder interviews
  - Ask students
  - Ask parents
  - Ask teachers

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# Resources



# Resources



- **Safe Routes Partnership**
  - [www.saferoutespartnership.org](http://www.saferoutespartnership.org)
- **CDC's School Health Index**
  - *Online self-evaluation and planning tool for schools.*
  - *Identifies policies and practices to help reduce youth health risk behaviors.*
- **Teacher education resources**
  - [activetrans.org/resources/education](http://activetrans.org/resources/education)
  - Activities, videos, games, lesson plans, etc.



## Overall Scorecard

[Export Overall Scorecard](#)

For each module, a "✓" appears where the module score falls. Use these scores to create a Plan for Improvement.

Modules	Low		Medium		High
	0-20%	21-40%	41-60%	61-80%	81-100%
Module 1 - School Health and Safety Policies and Environment					
Module 2 - Health Education					
Module 3 - Physical Education and Physical Activity Programs					
Module 4 - Nutrition Environment and Services					
Module 5 - School Health Services					
Module 6 - School Counseling, Psychological, and Social Services					
Module 7 - Social and Emotional Climate					
Module 8 - Physical Environment					
Module 9 - Employee Wellness and Health Promotion					
Module 10 - Family Engagement					
Module 11 - Community Involvement					

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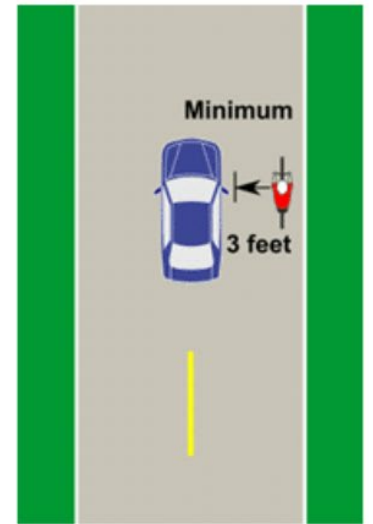
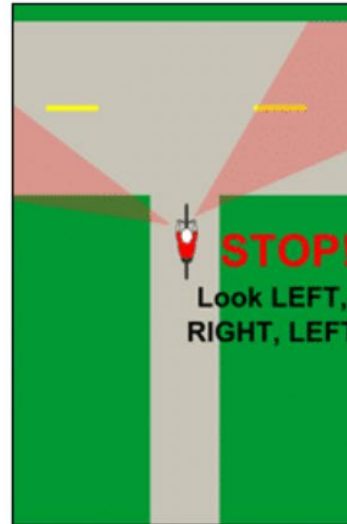
# Resources



## BikeSafetyQuiz



- **Bike Safety Quiz**
  - [Mini-grants](#) for schools
  - Schools can receive \$2 per student
- **SRTS Communications Toolkit**
- **Safe Routes Building Blocks Toolkit**



"We love using BikeSafetyQuiz. We find the kids enjoy doing it and love to quiz the parents too. Perfect for the e-learning that we were forced into this spring and summer."



Mike Oleszek

Wheaton North HS Driver Education Teacher

# Safe Routes to School

A Communications Roadmap  
to Move Illinois Communities

## Communications Toolkit



### Includes downloadable templates:

- Social media posts (English & Spanish)
- Event flyers and one-pagers
- Key messaging by audience type

#### SAMPLE POSTS

##### Facebook/Instagram/LinkedIn Caption Sample

We all want a community where our kids can achieve their highest potential. Students who can walk or roll to school make physical activity a part of their daily routines, which can improve their health and their academic performance.

Through #SafeRoutesToSchool, we can improve **[insert name]**'s sidewalks and bike lanes, better connect our neighborhoods, and create more safe, active, and affordable ways for people to get where they're going.

##### Spanish

Todos queremos una comunidad en la que nuestros hijos puedan alcanzar su máximo potencial. Los alumnos que pueden ir al colegio caminando o rodando hacen de la actividad física parte de su rutina diaria, lo que puede mejorar su salud y su rendimiento académico.

A través de #SafeRoutesToSchool, podemos mejorar las aceras y carriles bici de **[insertar nombre]**, conectar mejor nuestros barrios y crear formas más seguras, activas y asequibles para que la gente llegue a su destino.

##### Twitter/X Caption Sample

Students who can walk or roll to school make physical activity a part of their daily routines, which can improve their health and their academic performance. Through #SafeRoutesToSchool, we can help more people in **[insert name]** get where they're going safely and easily.

### Help Pave the Way

Let's get  
active with  
Safe Routes  
to School



### Ayúdenos a Allanar el Camino

Participemos  
activamente  
con Rutas  
Seguras a la  
Escuela

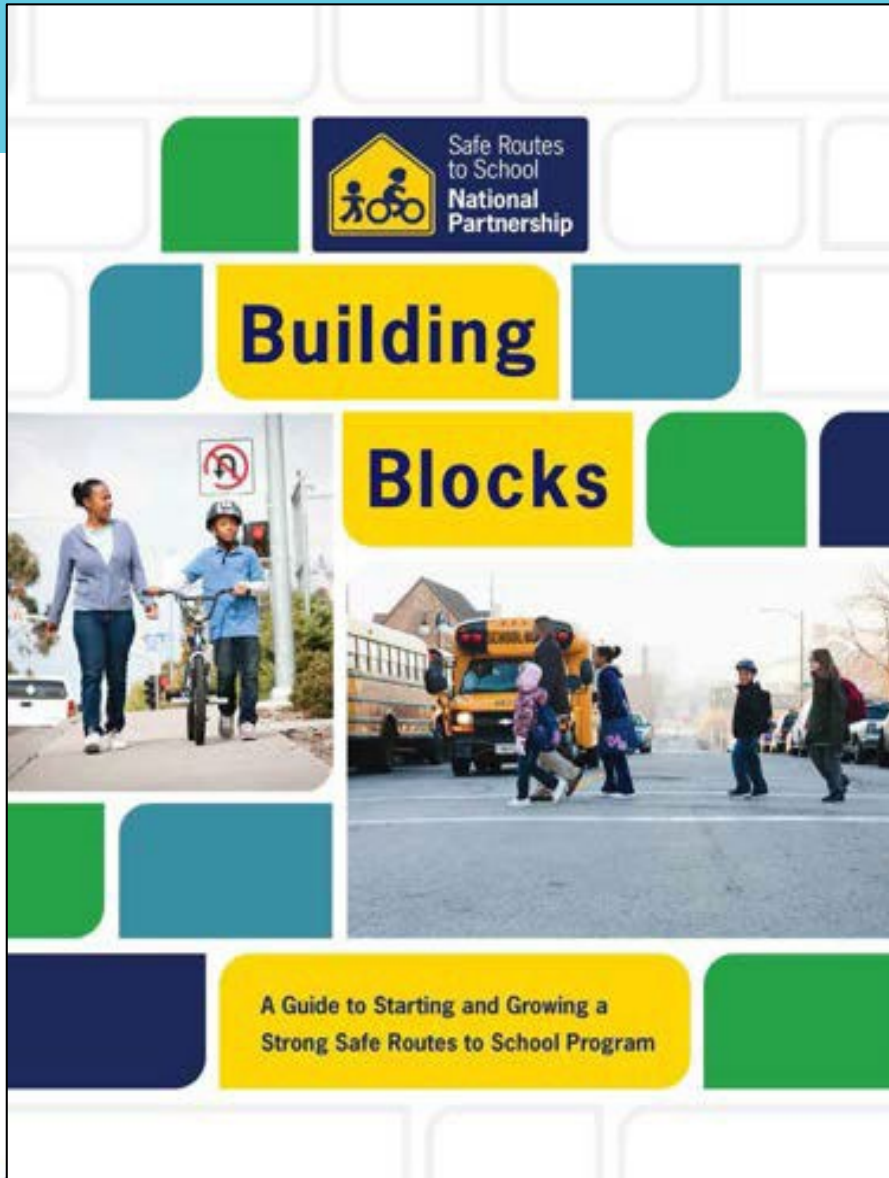


[Download All Support Materials  
\(English and Spanish\)](#)

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# Building Blocks Toolkit



- Building Blocks SRTS Guidebook
- Sample Action Plan Matrix
- Sample SRTS Resolutions
- Sample SRTS Coordinator Job Descriptions
- Stakeholder Assessment Worksheet
- Sample Task Force Invitation Letter



# Summary



1. Create a **SRTS task force** or committee
2. Develop an **action plan** with goals, planned activities (6 E's), and timelines
3. Apply for **SRTS funding!**
4. Kick off education and encouragement **activities**
  - Sustain and expand activities

# Thank you!



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ACTIVE  
TRANSPORTATION  
ALLIANCE



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# Resource links



- **Safe Routes Partnership:** [www.saferoutespartnership.org](http://www.saferoutespartnership.org)
- **Building Blocks Toolkit:** <https://www.saferoutespartnership.org/resources/toolkit/building-blocks>
- **SRTS Communications Toolkit:** [https://iphionline.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/IPHI-SRTSToolkit\\_Final.pdf](https://iphionline.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/IPHI-SRTSToolkit_Final.pdf)
- **CDC's School Health Index:** <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/shi/index.htm>
- **Poster for voting:** [5\\_CS\\_Skokie\\_District 73 Activity Posters](#)
- **Lesson plans:** [activetrans.org/resources/education](http://activetrans.org/resources/education)
- **Bike Bus Training:** [Bike to School – Chicago Family Biking](#)
- **SRTS Grant:**
  - **ATA Resources:** <https://activetrans.org/resources/education/safe-routes-to-school/>
  - **IDOT Webpage:** <https://idot.illinois.gov/transportation-system/local-transportation-partners/county-engineers-and-local-public-agencies/funding-programs/safe-routes-to-school.html>





# Summary of 6E ideas



- Classroom instruction
- Parent university
- Principal newsletters
- Walk & bike to school days
- Walking school buses & bike trains
- Bike rodeos
- Remote drop-off/pick up
- Early dismissal
- Crossing guards training & appreciation
- Competitions & contests
- Community awareness campaigns
- Walking & biking route maps
- Traffic calming, safer crossings, separated facilities, signage
- Walk & bike audits/assessments
- Student tallies
- Parent surveys