



EMBARGOED UNTIL 10:00 A.M. ET, THURSDAY, MARCH 4, 2021

March 4, 2021

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After rise in speeding during pandemic, groups launch initiatives to slow drivers down Grants will be awarded for comprehensive speed management pilot projects

Three national roadway safety organizations — the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA), Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) and National Road Safety Foundation (NRSF) — are partnering to fund and evaluate pilot projects by two states to reduce speeding.

Maryland and Virginia will each receive \$100,000 to develop, implement and evaluate speed management pilot programs that leverage engineering, equitable enforcement, education, public outreach and advocacy strategies simultaneously. Maryland's project will be located in a rural setting, while Virginia's will be in an urban area.

The speed pilots will launch once traffic patterns stabilize enough for IIHS experts to conduct a valid before-and-after evaluation of the programs. The goal is to develop a template for effective speed reduction strategies that can be duplicated in other states and communities. Speeding is a leading factor in motor vehicle deaths; more than 9,000 people die each year as a result of speeding-related crashes.

"Though speed management has been a problem for decades, speeding became even more acute during the COVID-19 pandemic, as less traffic has prompted some motorists to drive at high speeds on highways and city streets across the nation," says GHSA Executive Director Jonathan Adkins. "Enforcement challenges, rising speed limits — which IIHS research [confirms have cost thousands of lives](#) — and public acceptance of speeding create a demand for new strategies."

As states prepare for these pilot projects, safety groups have launched other activities related to speeding during the past year and plan more initiatives in 2021.

GHSA was one of the first national safety organizations to sound the alarm last April about [excessive speeding](#) observed nationwide in the beginning of the pandemic. Its state members initiated traffic safety campaigns to address this trend and other highway safety threats on the nation's roads. GHSA also hosted two national speed management webinars in 2020 with speakers from state highway safety offices, state departments of transportation, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and automated enforcement providers Conduent and Redflex.

Also in 2020, GHSA released two reports on vulnerable road users, who are often put at risk by speeding drivers. "[Pedestrian Traffic Fatalities by State: 2019 Preliminary Data](#)" projected the highest number of pedestrians killed in more than 30 years — a trend attributed in part to excessive speeding. "[Understanding and Tackling Micromobility: Transportation's New Disruptor](#)" focused on the rise of electric scooters and bicycles, whose riders, like pedestrians, are more at risk from speeding drivers.

In January 2021, GHSA issued its latest national report, "[Teens and Speeding: Breaking the Deadly Cycle](#)," which examines the significant role speeding plays in teen driver fatalities and offers practical tools to help parents rein in this



