

What's the Measure of Success? A 5 Year Review of Georgia Traffic Safety Grants Achievement



Authors: James Barlament, MA; Carol Cotton, PhD; Laurel Loftin, BSFCS; Christina Proctor, BSHP; Stuart Fors, EdD

Traffic Safety Research and Evaluation Group (TSREG), Department of Health Promotion and Behavior, College of Public Health, University of Georgia. 300 River Road, 325 Ramsey Center, Athens, GA, USA 30602-6522. Phone: (706) 542-2804, Fax: (706) 583-0753. Email: cpcotton@uga.edu

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Background: Each year, the Georgia Governor's Office of Highway Safety (GOHS) awards grants to qualified organizations to fund programs to reduce morbidity and mortality resulting from traffic crashes. Beginning in FFY2004, the Traffic Safety Research and Evaluation Group (TSREG) at the University of Georgia began evaluating grantee and GOHS achievement as a whole. With TSREG evaluation over the past 5 years (04-08), GOHS implemented programs that were well designed and implemented with fidelity where a need was documented.

Objective: To examine the activities of GOHS over the past five fiscal years of TSREG evaluation.

Methods: TSREG monitors GOHS grantees from beginning to end of each fiscal year using an online reporting system, a database for grantee funding information, a database tracking grantee achievement, and a database for Georgia crashes, injuries and fatalities. Using these tools, TSREG analyzed data from the past five years and made conclusions about the collective results of GOHS programming efforts.

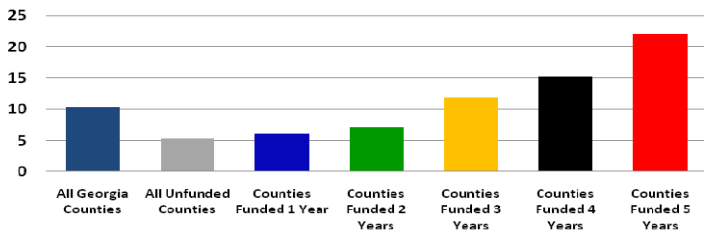
Findings:

1: GOHS funded grants in 71% of Georgia counties from 04-08. Of 103 counties with funding, 34 received funding 5 straight years. Grantees in these counties achieved 85% of objectives, and fatality rates in these counties dropped 9.2% compared to a 5.5% reduction in the state as a whole.

2: GOHS provided consistent funding to counties with high traffic deaths, with progressively less funding to counties with fewer average fatalities over 5 years.



Fig 2. GOHS Funding Priorities by County Fatalities 2004-2008 (Avg)



3: GOHS funding priorities over the past 5 years focused on Impaired Driving and Occupant Protection, with 40% of aggregate spending. In contrast, a combined 3% went toward Pedestrian, Bicycle and Motorcycle safety.

4: Over 5 years of evaluation, grantee objective achievement increased 20% from 69% to 83%. Achievement of Critical Objectives, those most crucial to overall performance, increased 50% from 60% to 90%. Grantee midpoint milestone achievement increased 37% from 52% to 71%, and endpoint milestone achievement increased 39% from 57% to 79%.

5: Each fiscal year, TSREG performs an initial review of grants called the evaluability study. Feedback with suggested revisions is provided to grantees needing clarification of objectives or milestones. Over the past 5 years, the number of GOHS grantees requiring revisions declined 40%, while grantees accepting revisions increased 73%. The evaluability study and consistent communication by TSREG has raised quality of grant writing and achievement standards, requiring a higher level of dedication from grantees.

6: Over the past 5 years, GOHS funding priorities corresponded to avg grantee achievement for major program categories. A majority of GOHS spending went to Impaired Driving, Occupant Protection, CTSP/Safe Communities, and Speed Control, and achievement rates among these grantees averaged 80%. Motorcycle Safety received the least funding, and achieved 60% of milestones and 65% of objectives.

7: Funding to grants with impaired driving and pedestrian components dropped 27% and 194%, respectively over 5 years. Funding to grants with occupant protection (3%), motorcycle (13%), speed control (52%), and young adult components (135%) increased.

8: Over the past 5 years, total crashes in Georgia decreased 11%, injuries fell 16%, and fatalities reduced 9%. Unrestrained fatalities dropped 7%, and speed-related fatalities decreased 8%. While alcohol-related fatalities rose 3% over the past five years, such deaths reduced 8% over the past three years. Pedestrian fatalities fell 5%, and fatal crashes involving drivers under age 21 decreased 29%, a result of stricter teen licensing laws and concerted efforts by GOHS. In contrast, motorcycle fatalities rose steadily from 111 to 177, a 60% increase over the past five years, which is almost twice the national increase of 31% over the same period.

Conclusion: Reducing fatalities in high priority programmatic areas corresponded to consistent funding by GOHS and high achievement objective and milestone achievement levels. Early 2009 data show a further decrease in total fatalities by at least 10%, with a decrease in motorcycle fatalities by more than 30%.

