

RP 308 – Idaho Alive at 25 Young Driver Education Program Effectiveness Evaluation

- Project Description:

In 2022, drivers ages 19 and under were involved in 2.4 times as many fatal or injury traffic crashes as expected. This age group comprised 5.6% of all licensed drivers in Idaho and accounted for 12.3% of drivers in fatal and injury crashes. Drivers aged 20 to 24 were involved in 1.5 times as many fatal or injury traffic crashes as expected. This troubling relationship between youthful drivers and likelihood of involvement in traffic crashes is not a recent trend, nor is it unique to Idaho.

In response to the disproportionate number of young drivers perennially involved in crashes, Idaho began to offer a defensive driving course for young drivers using the Alive at 25 Program in July 2009. Since then, more than 36,000 young drivers have completed the course, with 2,374 participants in the past year. The Alive at 25 Program is fully funded by the State of Idaho. There are no federal funds provided to offer the program in Idaho, and it is delivered at no cost to the student. The course, with curriculum developed by the National Safety Council (NSC), is taught by law enforcement officers throughout the state. There are presently 32 active instructors in Idaho and 175 courses are delivered on average each year throughout Idaho and virtually. It is a four-and-a-half-hour course focusing on the behaviors and decision-making young drivers and passengers display in vehicles. Instructors hold candid conversations with students about what happens if risky behavior is practiced or poor choices are made while driving.

Currently, little research exists as to the effectiveness of the course. This project will determine if the course has a demonstrable impact on the attitudes of drivers who take it, whether the drivers change their driving behaviors after taking the course, and if the drivers are less likely to receive a traffic citation or be involved in a crash than their peers after completing the course

- The objectives of this project are:

1. To review and evaluate instructional materials used in course delivery and compare to current best practices for similar programs aimed at changing participant attitudes and behaviors.
2. To examine degree of consistency among instructors and course delivery methods throughout the state.
3. To assess changes in participant attitudes toward risky driving.
4. To analyze available data to assess the extent to which the program has an impact on the driving behavior and performance of young drivers who complete the program in Idaho.

- Estimated Completion Date: September 2025

- Budget: \$100,000

Project Manager: Tabitha Smith (208) 334-8104 Tabitha.Smith@itd.idaho.gov

- Principal Investigator: Matthew May, PhD (208) 426-3715 matthewmay1@boisestate.edu

- TAC Members:

Lisa Losness (208) 334-8103 Lisa.Losness@itd.idaho.gov

Steve Rich (208) 334-8116 Steve.Rich@itd.idaho.gov

Julie Whistler (208) 334-8114 Julie.Whistler@itd.idaho.gov

Steven Swickard (208) 334-7888 Steven.Swickard@itd.idaho.gov

- FHWA Advisor: Lance Johnson (208) 334-9849 Lance.Johnson@dot.gov