

Planning, Prioritizing, and Partnering



The Riverside County Department of Public Health (RCDPH) received a non-infrastructure award to conduct a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program in 13 elementary schools in the Riverside Unified and Alvord Unified School Districts. Prior to applying for the award, RCDPH's Epidemiology, Research, and Evaluation Department compiled pedestrian and bicycle injury and fatality data among children 5-15 years old. This study helped RCDPH identify the "hot spots" that were used to select which school sites to include in the SRTS program. Additionally, all of the participating schools had at least 50-75 percent of students who were eligible for the Free and Reduced Price Meal program.

Riverside County was successful in institutionalizing sustainable SRTS activities at participating schools. Part of its success was due to holding SRTS workshops county-wide. These workshops highlighted the collaborative nature of the RCDPH SRTS program, including having representatives for each of the SRTS five Es (education, encouragement, enforcement, engineering and evaluation). The workshops were also used to gather input from community stakeholders that was later used to make infrastructure improvements.

Riverside County's participation in its first International Walk to School Day had 15 schools with over 3,000 students participating. From this initial success, the program grew to include *Walking Wednesdays* at all of the SRTS program schools plus other schools that were not officially part of the program. The entire community has come to anticipate Walk to School Day every October. Local elected officials and police and fire departments, along with many other volunteers, participate in the annual event by walking or bicycling to school with students.

Riverside County maintains a SRTS coalition of more than 40 community stakeholders that meet regularly to discuss the progress of the SRTS program, plan for events, and network with one another. The SRTS program continues to expand by using strategies such as bar code scanning to track students walking and bicycling to school. This technology tracks miles traveled, calories burned, gas saved, and also notifies parents when their children arrive at school.

KEYS TO RIVERSIDE COUNTY'S SUCCESS:

- Branding the program
- Strong relationships across a broad section of the community
- Consistent collection and use of data
- Commitment and buy-in from key decision-makers
- Wise use of resources from the National Center for SRTS, SRTS National Partnership, Caltrans, California SRTS Technical Assistance Resource Center, and other organizations

