WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING

Older Driver Safety study

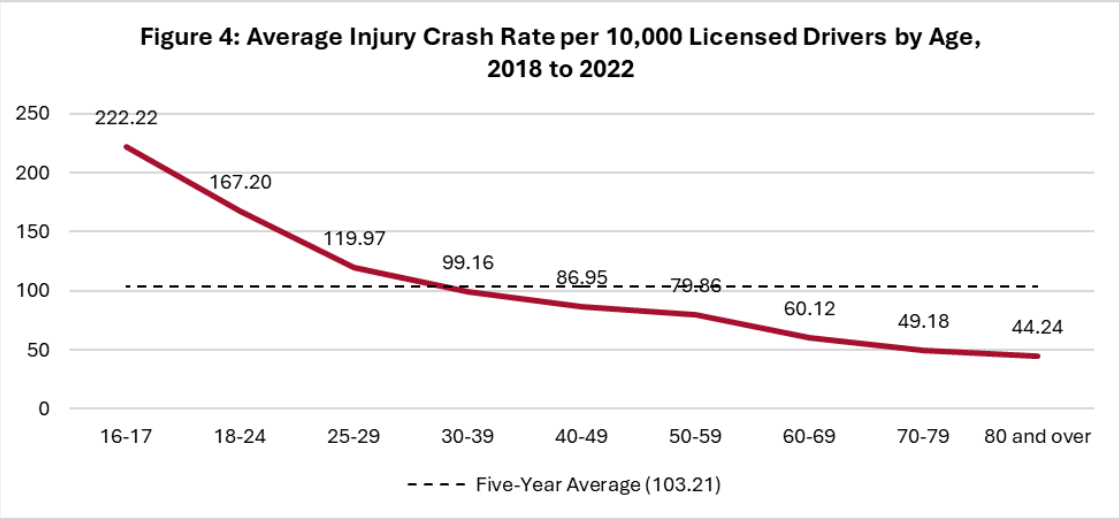
DOL was directed to develop a comprehensive plan aimed at improving older driver safety.

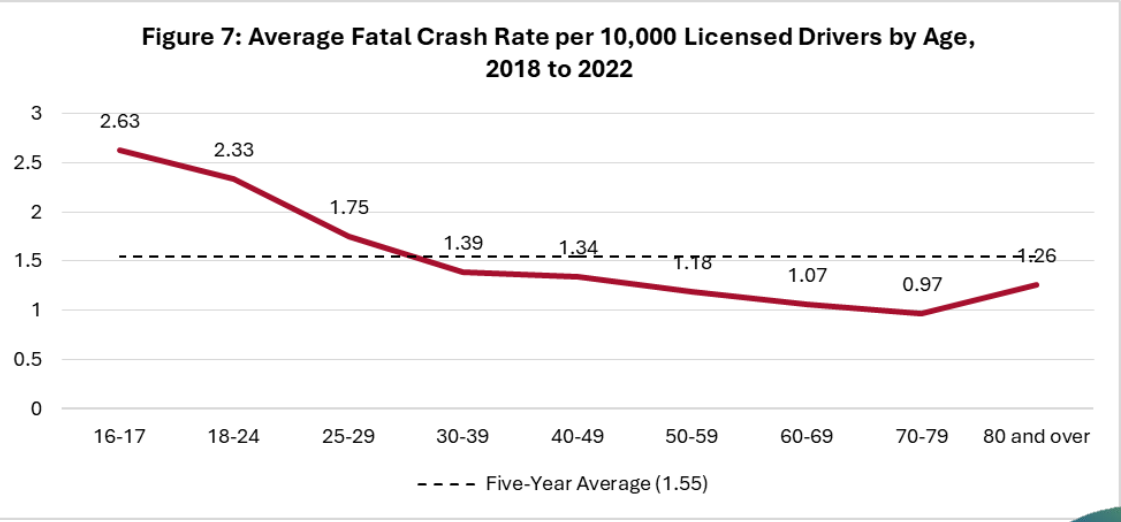
The legislation required the plan to include at least four primary components:

- Comprehensive review of DOL policies surrounding older drivers and medically at-risk drivers.
- Feasibility analysis of establishing a medical advisory board to advise DOL on policy related to:
  - General policy for at-risk drivers
  - Driving privileges for individual medically at-risk drivers
  - Appeals process for drivers whose privileges are revoked or restricted due to medical conditions
- Recommended assessment tool for DOL to better assess a driver's potential risk to themselves or others.
- Information on how each component of the plan improves older driver safety while preserving maximum level of older driver independence and privacy.

Key Findings from the final report submitted by WSU:

- Older drivers have lower risk of crash involvement compared to young and middle-aged drivers.
  - There is elevated risk for fatal crash involvement for drivers age 80+.



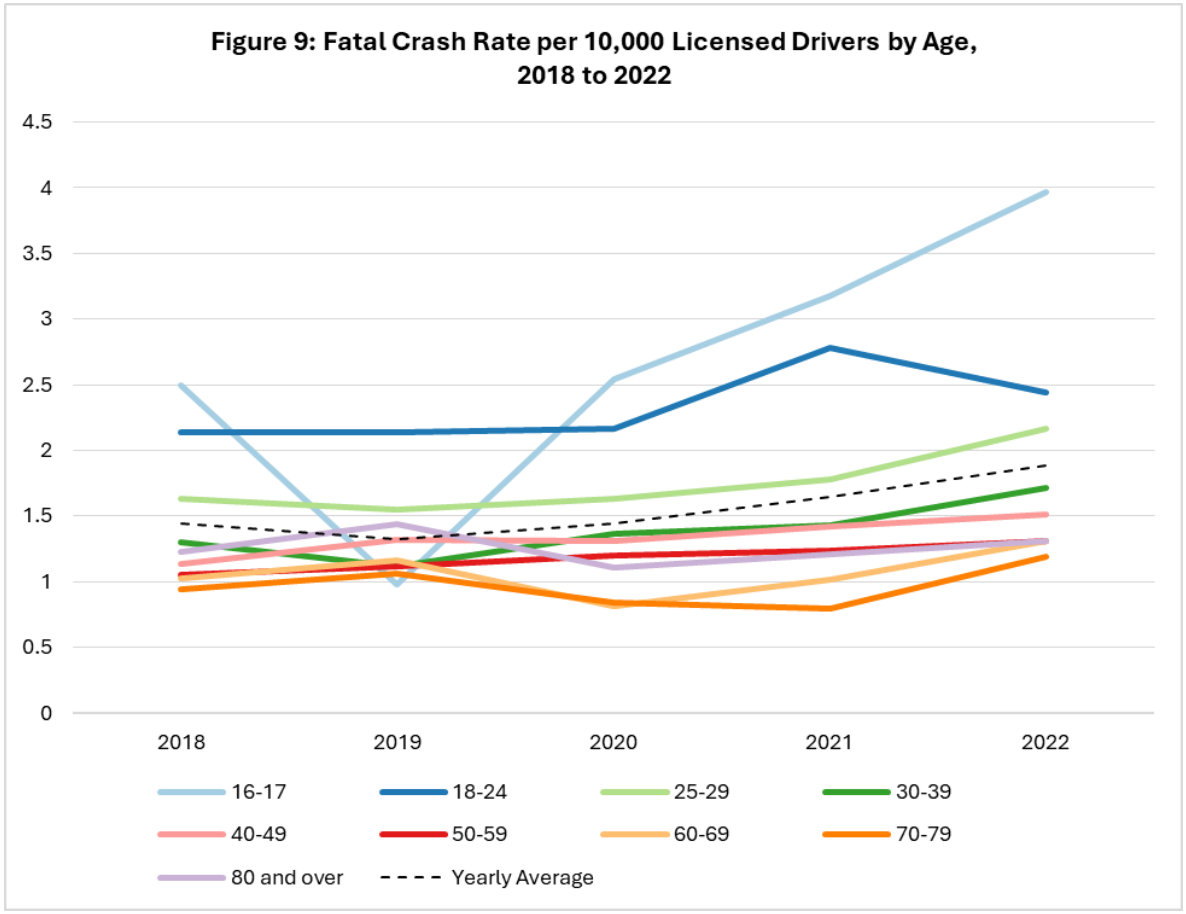


Key Findings from the final report submitted by WSU:

- Older drivers have a higher crash risk per mile driven, but lower risk in terms of crash involvement per licensed driver. This is likely due to older drivers self-regulating (choosing to drive less often, shorter distances, or not drive at night).

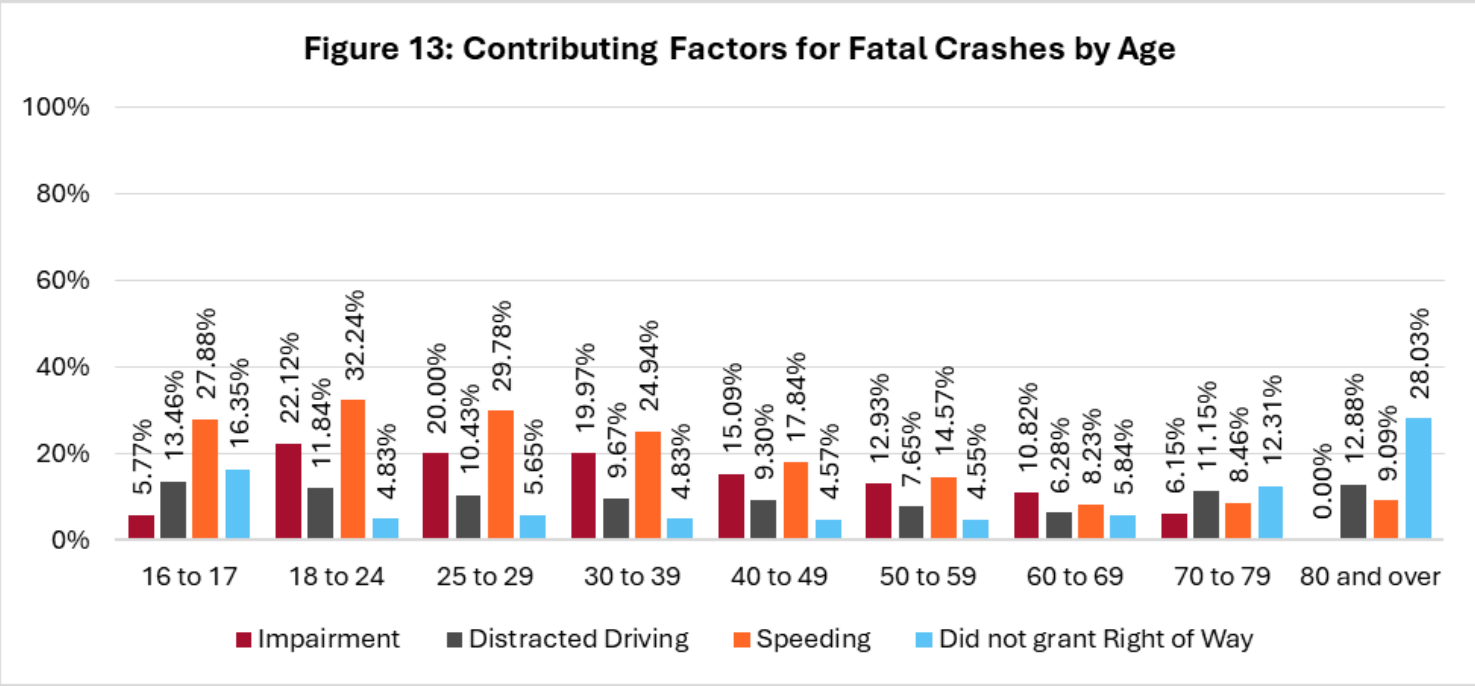
Key Findings from the final report submitted by WSU:

- Fatal injury crash rates in Washington State have increased between 2018 to 2022, but the increase is largely driven by teen (16-17 year old) drivers.



Key Findings from the final report submitted by WSU:

- When older drivers are involved in fatal crashes, not granting right-of-way is their most common contributing factor



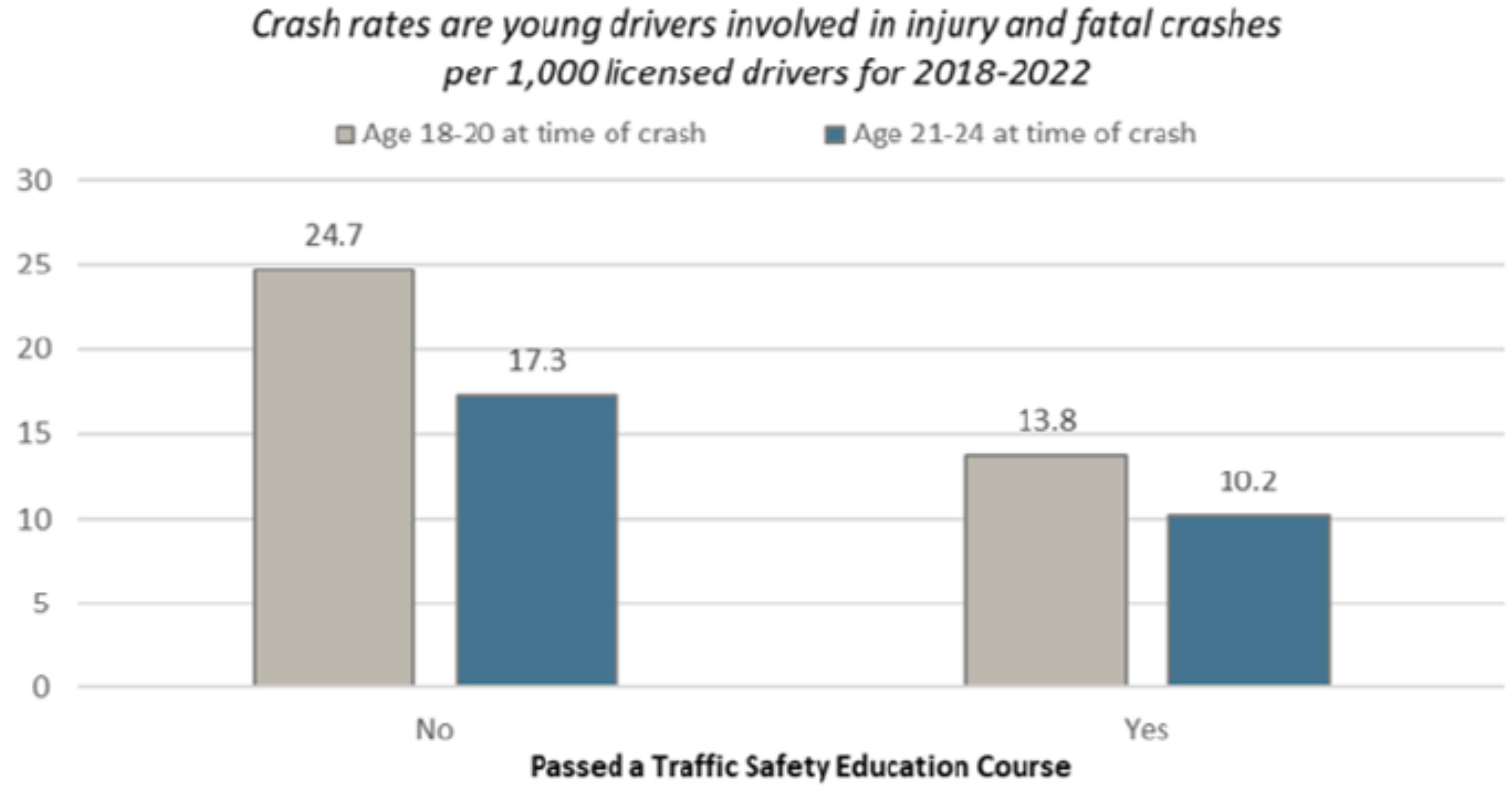
Recommendations:

- **Establish an Older & Medically At-Risk Driver Program at DOL**
  - Establish a campaign to normalize aging out of driving and develop resources to help make this transition easier.
- **Implement changes to DOL policies and counter assessments**
  - Expand and evaluate use of licensing restrictions; enhance the appeals process; pilot new screening tools; promote use of standardized assessment tools.
- **Establish a permanent medical advisory board at DOL**
  - Board should include 7-10 members from a variety of medical and professional backgrounds to advise on policy, recommend assessment tools, and consult on licensing restrictions for medically at-risk drivers.

Young Driver Safety Study
ESSB 5583

The “Improving Young Driver Safety (ESSB 5583) Implementation Plan”, developed collaboratively by the Washington State Department of Licensing (**DOL**), and Washington State University (**WSU**), and with input from the Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (**OSPI**), provides a comprehensive analysis of the current state of driver education in Washington.

While ESSB 5583 mandated the expansion of driver education to individuals aged 18 to 24, this plan recognizes the critical need to first **establish a strong foundation** within the existing driver education system before expanding requirements.



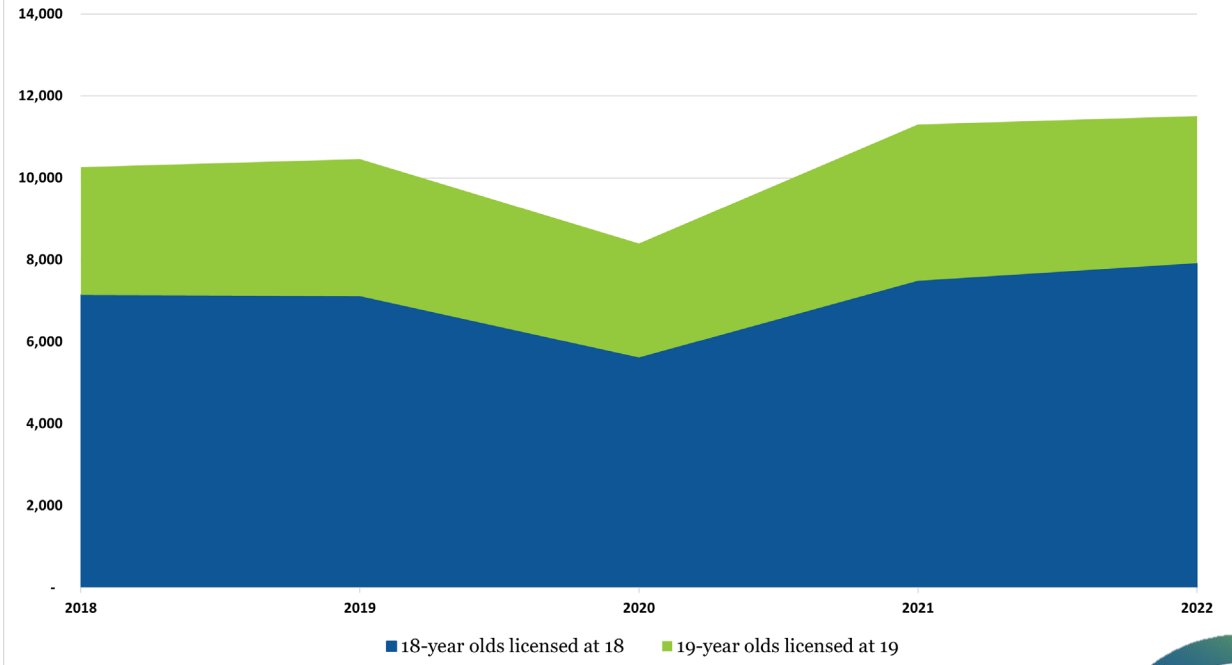
Note. This chart shows a correlation between the completion of driver training and reduced crash risk. Further data analysis must be conducted to determine whether driver training causes reduced crash risk. Only young drivers who were likely first licensed in Washington State prior to the date of the crash are included. Crash rates are calculated using average annual crashes and licensed driver counts for 2018 through 2022. This chart includes injury and fatal crashes (it excludes non-injury and unknown injury crashes).

		Young driver crash involvement rates for injury and fatal crashes for 2018-2022 *Driver crash involvements per 1,000 licensed drivers*								
	2018-2022 Average	Age of licensed drivers								
		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Age when first licensed	16	12.3	15.7	16.3	15.4	14.1	13.5	12.9	12.5	11.9
	17	-	11.9	15.5	15.2	14.7	16.0	15.8	17.2	15.7
	18	-	-	19.6	18.3	16.5	17.0	16.0	14.5	15.5
	19	-	-	-	15.3	13.8	12.2	12.7	13.2	10.3
	20	-	-	-	-	15.8	15.6	12.5	12.2	11.6
	21	-	-	-	-	-	16.0	15.5	12.8	13.7
	22	-	-	-	-	-	-	14.8	14.0	12.9
	23	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10.3	12.5
	24	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14.2

If the driver education age requirement expands through age 24, WSU projects a **required industry growth of 60%** to meet that demand.

The infrastructure of both public and private driver education programs is insufficient to accommodate an expansion of mandatory training. Therefore, this plan prioritizes enhancing the quality and accessibility of driver education for those under 18, while laying the groundwork for expansion to older age groups.

Figure 2: *Point-in-Time Counts of Licensed Drivers* by Year*

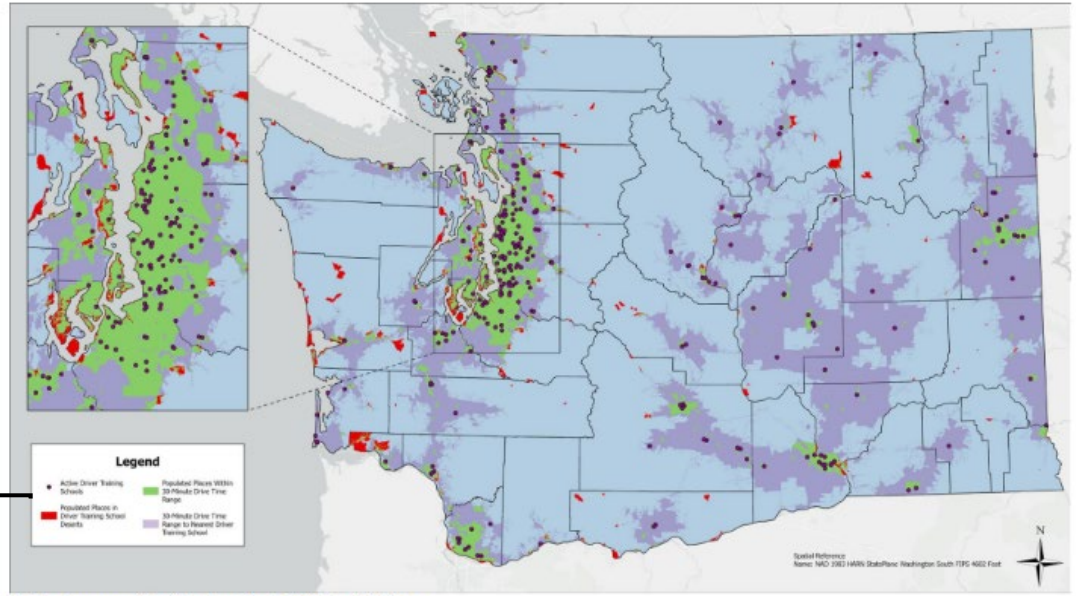


Note. Data source: DOL DRIVES licensing data

*Only includes drivers who are receiving their first license in WA State (excludes out of state transfers).

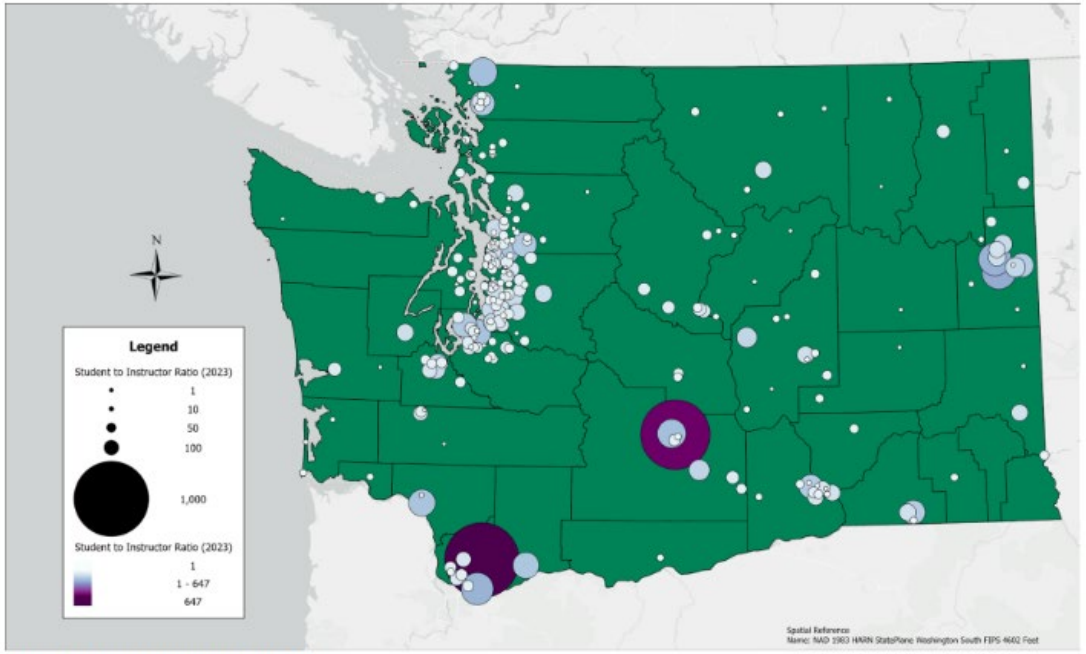
ESSB 5583 / Improving Young Driver Safety: Increasing Equity and Access

Figure 7: Identifying Driving School Deserts Using 30-Minute Drive Times to Nearest Schools (2024)

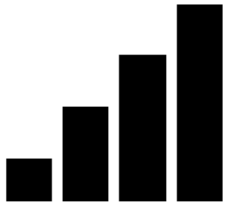


Data Sources: Washington State DOL; ArcGIS Pro
Shapefile Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; Washington State Office of Financial Management

Figure 4: Student to Instructor Ratio by School Census Tract (2023)



Data Source: Washington State DOL
Shapefile Source: Washington State Office of Financial Management



Strengthening the Instructor Workforce: Increasing the number of qualified instructors through improved training, certification pathways, and ongoing support to grow capacity.

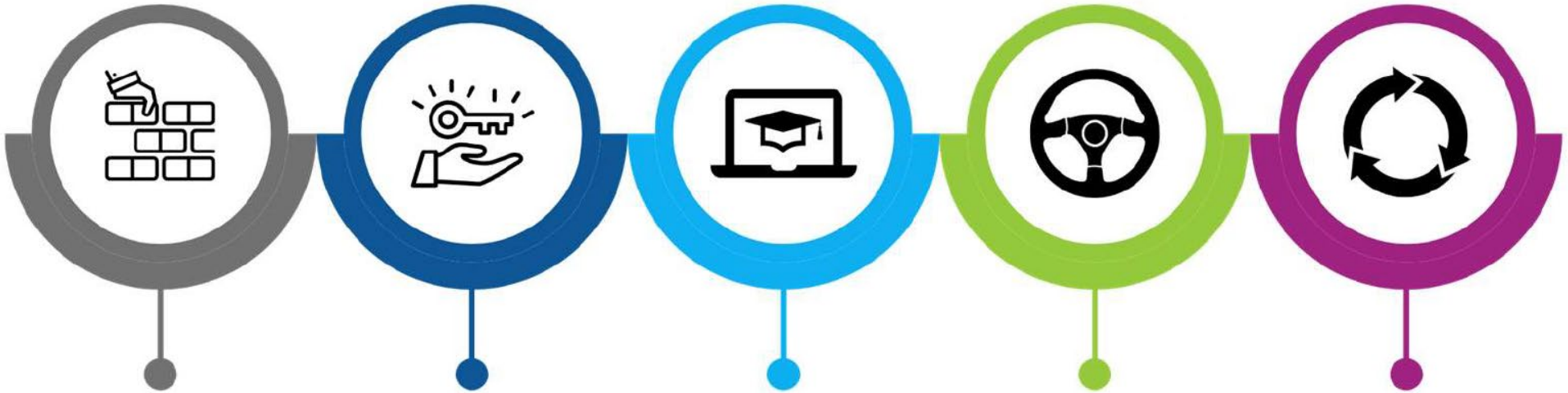
Enhancing Access and Affordability: Expanding access to driver education for all individuals under 18 years old, particularly in underserved communities, through increased awareness of resources, financial aid programs, and diverse curriculum delivery methods.

Fostering Diversity and Inclusion: Creating a more diverse and inclusive driver education industry by supporting aspiring driver training school owners and instructors from varied backgrounds.

To implement a DE requirement pre-licensure for novice drivers under 25, we must:

- Build infrastructure and increase accessibility prior to expanding mandatory driver education to 18 to 24-year-olds.
- Help reduce delay of licensure for 16-17-year-olds by increasing opportunity, financial support, and mentoring.
- Address the existing gaps where driver education is largely unavailable
- Create sustainably funded scholarship or grant programs, prioritizing high-need communities, to:
  - provide free or reduced cost driver education,
  - support current driver education, and
  - encourage expansion and innovation for driver education.

Phased Approach to Young Driver Safety



Phase 1

Strengthening the Foundation

- Maintain and enhance current efforts
- Establish funding mechanisms
- Pilot expansion of education opportunities for instructors and novice drivers

Phase 2

Expanding Access & Capacity

- Enhance instructor workforce
- Increase accessibility and affordability

Phase 3

Expanding Driver Education Opportunity

- Implement options for competency-based driver education

Phase 4

Expanding Driver Education Requirements

- Implement mandatory driver education for ages 18-21

Phase 5

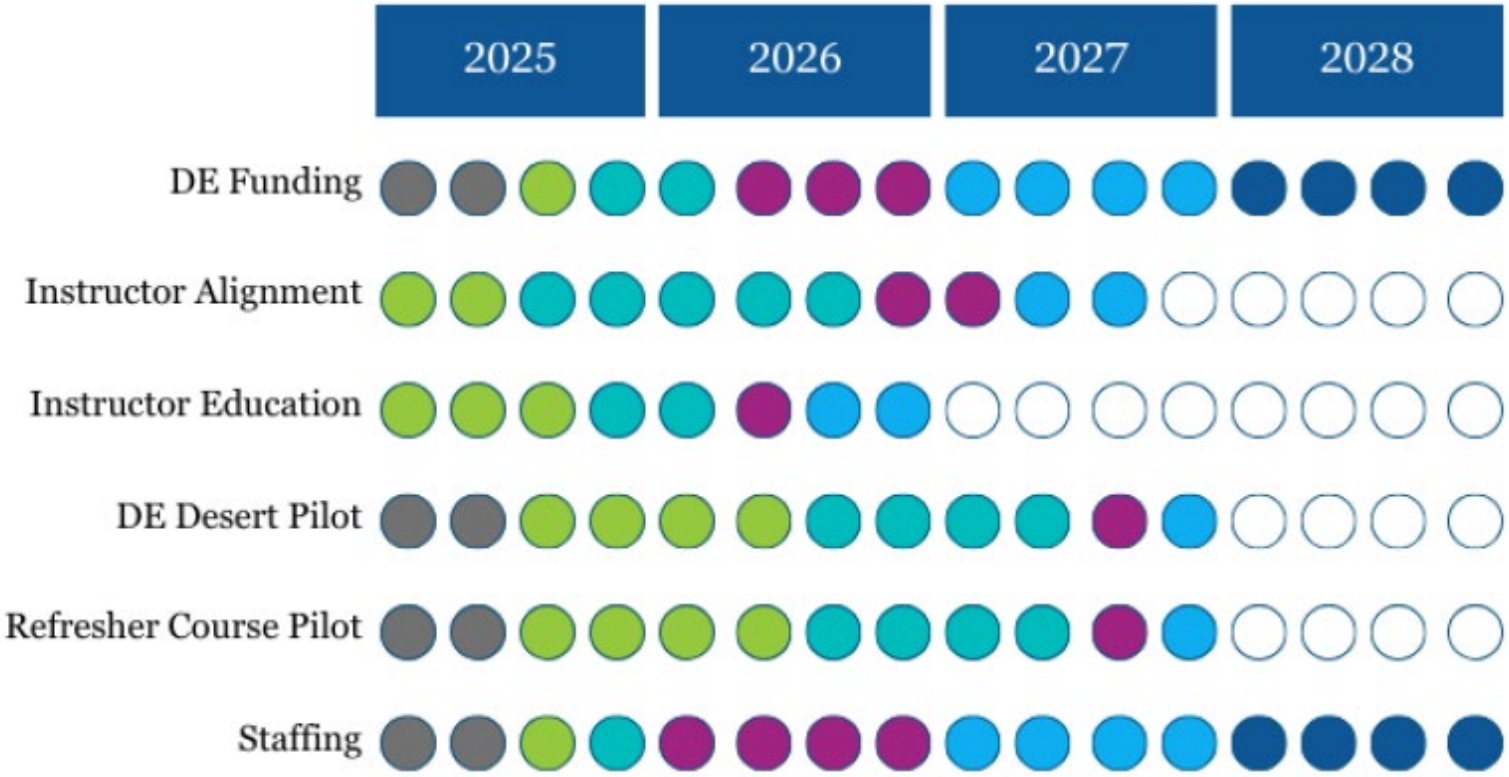
Maintaining, Evaluating, & Expanding

- Foster diversity and inclusion
- Explore lifelong learning opportunities
- Explore and adopt new technologies
- Explore expanding driver education requirements beyond age 21

ESSB 5583 / Improving Young Driver Safety

	DE FUNDING	INSTRUCTOR ALIGNMENT	INSTRUCTOR EDUCATION	DE DESERT PILOT	REFRESHER COURSE PILOT	STAFFING
PHASE 1: STRENGTHEN FOUNDATION	Create a dedicated traffic safety fund and establish revenue streams. WSL determines entity managing program and funds.	DOL, OSPI, and private industry reach final agreement on competency-based and/or aligned driver instructor pathway(s).	Pilot instructor certification and business guidance courses.	Onboarding of software and system changes for pilot.	Develop refresher course content. Onboard software, system, and legislative changes to support refresher course	Convert temporary DOL staffing hired under 5583 to permanent.
PHASE 2: EXPAND ACCESS AND CAPACITY	Entity launches grant and/or scholarship program(s). Allocation of funds to 16-17 age range.	System and legislative changes to support alternative pathway alignment.	Transition driver instructor pilot to program of record. (WSL determines who teaches course.) If kept by DOL, convert to LMS.	Pilot driver education program in driver education deserts.	Pilot refresher course.	Continue creating products that support young adults and driver instructors.
PHASE 3: STABILIZATION	Funding generated for expansion of grant and/or scholarship program to those 18-21.	Implementation of alternative pathway(s).	Assessment and reporting of courses.	Assessment and reporting of program.	Evaluation of refresher course.	Grow FTE along with industry growth to maintain quality of service.
Contingent upon 40% industry growth						
PHASE 4: EXPAND DRIVER EDUCATION TO 18-21	Funding generated for expansion of grant and/or scholarship program to those 22-24.	Evaluation and continual improvement of program.	Implement continuing education support courses for driver instructors.	Convert driver education pilot to program of record. Consider expansion. (Determined by evaluation of program.)	Continue or sunset refresher course. (Determined by evaluation of program.)	Grow FTE along with industry growth to maintain quality of service.
Contingent upon 20% industry growth						
PHASE 5: EXPAND DRIVER EDUCATION TO 22-24	Maintain funding appropriate for need and conduct periodic assessment.					Grow FTE along with industry growth to maintain quality of service.

ESSB 5583 / Improving Young Driver Safety



Note. Years reflect proposed phase start dates. Times are representative estimates. Phase 1 includes some pre-existing work completed as part of 5583. Movement to Phase 4 is contingent upon 40% industry growth. Movement to Phase 5 is contingent upon 20% industry growth.

Driver Education Deserts

- **Sustain DOL Funding:** Continue funding to develop, maintain, and deliver traffic safety education at the Department of Licensing (DOL).
- **Enhance Access:** Prioritize and improve access to driver education within existing requirements.
- **Expand High School Programs:** Increase the availability of traffic safety education programs in public high schools.
  - **Integrate into CTE & Life Skills:** Incorporate traffic safety education into Career and Technical Education (CTE) and life skills curricula.
  - **Fund High School Support:** Establish dedicated funding programs to support driver education in high schools.

Driver Education Deserts

- Driver education desert pilot:
  - Deliver online instructor-led and self-paced theory training with material for both the learner-driver and their parent, guardian, or driver-mentor to act as a coach.
  - Through a driver performance dashboard, students, coaches, and educators employed by the Department of Licensing will monitor progress and identify strengths and opportunities during the learning stage and deliver comprehensive driver education tailored to learner needs and proficiencies.

Driver Education Deserts

- The average cost of driver education in Washington State is ~$625 - for every $1 million allocated, approximately 1.6K people could take a fully funded driver training education course.
    - The pilot delivers driver education to 3x the students at a third of the cost.

Opportunities for refresher training

- Leverage online license renewals to deliver targeted safety training, to improve driver behavior and create a safer driving environment.
- Pilot educational training focused on hazard-based perception and risk management
- Integrate ongoing safety education into the driver's licensing process to enhance skills and promote road safety throughout their driving lifetime.

For Future consideration:

Extending graduated driver licensing (GDL)

- Research the effectiveness of Graduated Driver License (GDL) regulations to persons aged 18 to 24, with or without a driver training requirement.
  - CA DMV is due to publish results of a related study in 2025.

- Research the extension of GDL without driver education.

Implementation Plan Initiative	Effectiveness	Cost	Time (in yrs.)	Legislation	Appropriation
Maintain Appropriations for Traffic Safety Education	★★★★★	$$	<1	No	Yes
Establish Traffic Safety Education Fund	★★★★★	$	<1	Yes	No
Traffic Safety Educator Training and Certification	★★★★	$$	<1	No	Yes
Revenue Generation for Traffic Safety Education	★★★★★	$$$	1-3	Yes	Yes*
Driver Education Desert TSE Pilot	★★★	$$	1-3	Yes	Yes
Learning Management System	★★★★★★	$$	1-3	No	Yes
Align OSPI and DOL Requirements for Instructors	★★★★	$$$	3-5	Yes	Yes*
Pilot Refresher Course	★	$$	1-3	No	Yes

Note. Depending on recommendation selected.