

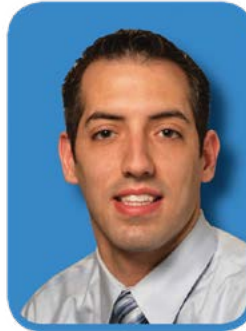


Summer 2018



Coordinator's Corner

The 2017-2018 school year ended on a high note for the Virginia Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program with 286 schools participating in Bike to School Day, a 27 percent increase from last year. We're also celebrating another round of Non-Infrastructure Grant awards, with 16 returning recipients that will continue SRTS programming for another year.



The end of the school year doesn't mean an end to SRTS. In fact, summer is a great time to try out new routes and hone bike riding skills. Check out the tips in this newsletter to stay safe and comfortable when walking in the summer heat, and guidance for parents and other adults helping children learn to ride a bike. When you need to take a break inside, you can start planning for upcoming fall events and due dates with the SRTS Calendar linked below.

If you have questions or would like more information on any of the topics included here, please call the Virginia SRTS Hotline at 1-855-601-7787 or send an email to info@virginiasrts.org.

Regards,
Rob Williams
Virginia SRTS Coordinator

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CALENDAR

AUGUST

9: QuickStart Mini-grant due date

SEPTEMBER

All month: Take Student Travel Tallies
13: QuickStart Mini-grant and Walkabout Mini-grant due date

OCTOBER

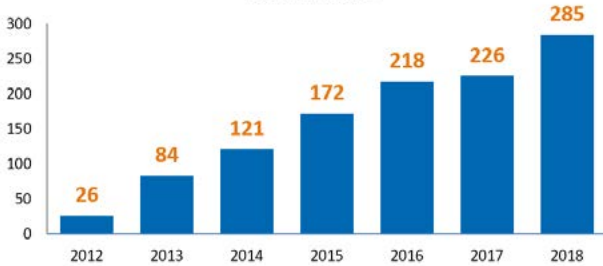
All month: Take Student Travel Tallies
10: Walk to School Day
11: QuickStart Mini-grant due date

Bike to School Day Wrap Up

Bike to School Day 2018 was a huge success in Virginia! This year had the highest participation rate ever, with 286 events around the state; a 27 percent increase from 2017. Two hundred and forty-three elementary schools and forty-three middle schools took part in Bike to School Day. The school systems with the most events were Fairfax County Public Schools (71 events), Chesapeake Public Schools (35 events), Arlington County Public Schools (34 events), and Alexandria City Public Schools (20 events).



Virginia BTSD Participation
2012-2018



On top of that, Virginia had the second-highest number of Bike to School Day events of any state in the nation, up from #4 last year! California had the most events with 376 events and about 4.5 times the population of Virginia.

Thanks to our local SRTS coordinators, school administrators, teachers, parents, and event organizers! Here's to an even higher turnout next year when Bike to School Day occurs on May 8, 2019.



Photos, clockwise from top: Elkton Elementary, Galax Elementary, Carver Elementary, and Hillside Elementary

Non-Infrastructure Grants

The Virginia SRTS Program funds municipal- or school division-based local SRTS coordinators through its Non-Infrastructure Grant program. This reimbursement program funds both full- and part-time SRTS coordinators that work closely with schools to teach bicycle and pedestrian safety, promote participation in SRTS events, and help improve walking and bicycling conditions in their communities. We are pleased to announce the sixteen Non-Infrastructure Grants recipients for the 2018-2019 school year:

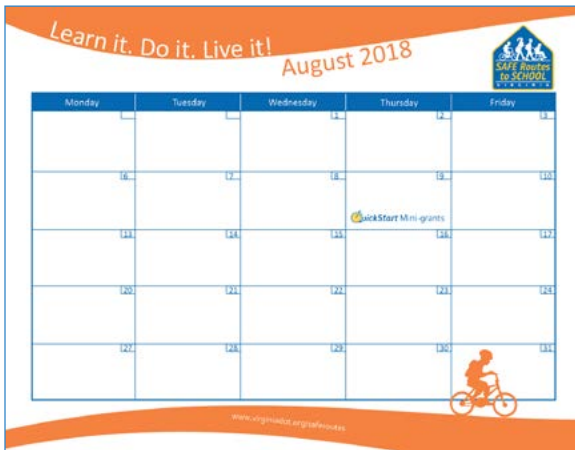
Organization	Number of Schools	Grant Award	Local Match
2018-2019 SRTS Non-Infrastructure Grants			
Alexandria City PS	12	\$62,700	\$15,675
Arlington PS	30	\$80,600	\$20,150
Chesapeake PS	38	\$59,000	\$14,750
Chesterfield County PS	11	\$56,750	\$14,188
City of Charlottesville	10	\$77,000	\$0
City of Galax	3	\$17,116	\$4,279
Fairfax County PS	168	\$75,777	\$18,944
Greater Richmond F4K	7	\$43,000	\$10,750
Loudoun County PS	22	\$66,600	\$16,650
Newport News PS	25	\$82,000	\$20,500
Norfolk PS	41	\$87,000	\$21,750
Portsmouth PS	12	\$30,500	\$7,625
Prince William County PS	30	\$58,800	\$14,700
Rockingham County PS	19	\$48,000	\$12,000
Sentara RMH (Harrisonburg)	8	\$23,519	\$5,880
Williamsburg-JCC PS	7	\$44,000	\$11,000
Totals	443	\$912,362	\$208,841

While the number of participating organizations remains the same as last year, the coordinators will be working with 14 new schools starting next fall. Between VDOT and local match, over \$1.2 million in funds will be available for SRTS activities this school year.

More information and resources about Non-Infrastructure Grants are available on our [School Travel Plans and Grants](#) webpage. Resources include grant guidelines, the Activities and Programs Plan template, and a FAQ sheet.

SRTS Calendar 2018-2019

From Bike to School Day to Crossing Guard Appreciation Day, Safe Routes to School (SRTS) events can easily be a regular part of the school year. However, as the first day of school approaches, it's important for schools to keep track of planned Safe Routes events. Walk to School Day and Student Travel Tallies take place in the beginning of the school year, which can make organizing them pretty hectic alongside other school-related activities.



It's important for schools to keep track of planned Safe Routes events so that students, parents, teachers, and the community can participate. To help, we have created a downloadable calendar template with all the dates you need to know. Getting events on the calendar is a useful first step towards making SRTS sustainable throughout the school year and gives students and families something to look forward to!

Whether this is your first year organizing Walk to School Day or Bike to School Day or you're a veteran, this calendar will help you plan events, apply for funding, and promote safe walking and bicycling at your school. You can find the calendar online by [clicking here](#).

Safe Walking Tips: Summer Edition

Summers in Virginia are notoriously hot and humid, which can make getting around on foot a bit sticky. Apart from simply causing discomfort, exposure to extreme heat also poses health risks—including dehydration and heat stroke—all of which can potentially land you in the hospital. But don't panic! You can stay safe and (reasonably) comfortable by taking a few sensible precautions, brought to you by our friends at WalkArlington.



Know the Symptoms

Be aware of the symptoms of heat-related illnesses such as confusion, anxiety, loss of consciousness or a marked decrease in sweating. Stop and seek treatment if you begin to experience any of them.

Stay Hydrated

Make sure you're well hydrated before walking by drinking 16 oz. of water. ALWAYS take water with you. As a general rule, drink 1 cup of water for every mile (15-20 minutes) or whenever you feel thirsty. Walking more than an hour? Switch to a sports drink with electrolytes to maintain the proper balance of salt in your body.

Time Your Walks

If your schedule allows, plan your walking trips for either early morning or evening to avoid both extreme heat and increased air pollution. Take frequent breaks in air-conditioned surroundings if you're walking during the hottest part of the day.

Plan Your Route

Be sure to get directions to your destination to prevent unnecessary time spent in the heat in case you get lost. Try to plan a pedestrian-friendly route that includes some shade. Trees, shrubs and water all have a cooling effect, as opposed to areas that are predominantly asphalt or surrounded by heat-absorbing buildings.

Use Cooling Products

A variety of products are available to keep you cool for hours at a time. Neck coolers are especially popular since the neck area plays an important role in cooling the rest of the body. You can purchase one, or find directions online by searching "homemade neck coolers."

Wear Proper Clothing

Think light colors and breathable fabrics. Wicking is a good choice for longer walks, as it takes moisture away from the body. Wear a hat to provide your own shade, and avoid cotton socks which can get damp from perspiration and cause blisters. Choose shoes with breathable mesh uppers.

Check Air Quality

In addition to temperature forecasts, be sure to check the air quality index at CleanAirPartners.net. Heat and humidity can cause increased ozone pollution at ground level, which can cause respiratory and other health problems, especially for children, the elderly and those with chronic illnesses.

[WalkArlington](#) is Arlington County's walking education and encouragement program. Our mission is to promote a culture of walkability and active transportation for all ages and abilities. Active modes of transportation, including walking, biking and rolling, are central to Arlington's vision of an equitable transportation system that enhances the overall quality of life for those who live, work and play in Arlington County.

WalkArlington supports the County's vision by working collaboratively with local citizens, businesses, stakeholders and County departments to offer programs that promote active transportation choices! WalkArlington is a program of Arlington County Commuter Services (ACCS), a bureau of Arlington's Department of Environmental Services. ACCS serves people who live, work or visit Arlington through programs and services that are designed to encourage the use of mass transit, carpooling and vanpooling, bicycling, walking, teleworking and other alternatives to driving alone.

Tips for Teaching Students How to Ride a Bike

Long daylight hours and fewer commitments make summer the perfect time to learn how to ride a bike. Not everyone has an easy time mastering this important life-long skill, so we've compiled a list of tips to help keep it fun and manageable for students (and their parents)! The tips cover how to properly fit a helmet, the best places to ride for beginners, and the essential skills of starting and stopping.

How to Find the Right Bicycle Helmet

Before their children even get on a bike, parents should make sure their children have a properly fitting helmet. A helmet helps prevent head and brain injuries and provides a barrier between your



head and anything it encounters. However, bicycle helmets are only effective when they're properly fitted and correctly worn. Here's how to make sure your helmet can do its job when going for a bicycle ride.

How Helmets Work

Helmets have several parts:

- The plastic shell is smooth and slides against hard surfaces (like pavement) so your neck won't jerk or twist in a crash.
- A foam liner inside the shell helps absorb the shock from a crash, reducing the effects on your head and brain.
- Straps come around the sides and under your chin to properly secure the helmet.

Making Sure Your Helmet Fits Right

When buying a helmet, look for ones that are specially designed for bicycling. Helmets designed for other uses may not provide the right protection in the event of a crash.

Show off your style by decorating your helmet with stickers or other additions, but be careful not to cut or puncture any parts of the helmet, including the foam padding.

Your helmet should rest level on your head and not move around. Make sure your helmet fits properly by following the 2-2-2 rule:

- There should be a 2-finger width between your eyebrows and the helmet.
- The helmet's 2 straps should make a "V" below your earlobe.
- The chinstrap should be snug and fit no more than 2 fingers between the strap and your chin.

Crash and Trash

If your bicycle helmet is damaged, it may not protect your head in the event of a crash, and should be replaced.

Find more information [here](#) and [here](#).

Where to Ride with Beginning Riders

New riders can be excited to get out and start bicycling, but it's important to find places where they can practice safely and with as few distractions as possible. Here are a few suggestions for where to take novice riders:



- Find an area with minimal obstacles and distractions that will make it easy for riders to focus on bicycling.
- In the beginning, practice riding on a large, flat, paved surface. An empty parking lot is a great location to practice, as is a running track.
- Once your rider is more comfortable, consider riding on the sidewalk, or on a street with very low and slow-moving traffic. Only introduce your rider to these conditions when he/she is comfortable bicycling and can pay attention to their surroundings.
- Busy trails can be a dangerous place for new riders, as they may have lots of other walkers, runners, and bicyclists who move faster and may not be paying attention.
- Ride at times of day when the temperature will be comfortable, so your rider will be able to focus on bicycling and not how hot or cold it is. Hot or slippery pavement may also make it harder to ride and increase the chance of injury.

How to Get Started (and Stop)

Once your rider has a properly fitted helmet and a safe place to practice, it's time to ride! The first step to riding a bicycle is to start pedaling! However, it can be challenging for new riders to self-start on a bicycle, and they may get discouraged at first.

Here are two ways you can teach new riders to start pedaling. There's no one perfect way to start riding. Your rider might combine these two starts or have a totally different start. All that matters is that your rider can start pedaling confidently!

The Frog Start

Have your rider sit on the bike with both feet on the ground (you may need to lower the seat so your rider can reach the ground), then tell them to push off the ground three times really hard, just like a frog. Then, have them put both feet on the pedals and start pedaling. To help them remember, chant along with them "Push, push, push, pedal!"

The Power Start

Have your rider walk their bike forward until one pedal is higher than the other, then put their foot on the higher pedal and the other foot on the ground. As your rider pushes down on the high pedal, they should put their other foot on the lower pedal and start pedaling.

Once a new rider is going, they'll need to stop! When teaching a young rider how to start and stop on a bike with a hand brake, remind them that "feet make you go" and "hands make you stop." Explain that squeezing the hand brake will make the bike stop, so your rider should put both feet on the ground. You can practice this with your rider by having them pedal and when you say "stop," they squeeze the hand brake and put both feet on the ground, while holding the bike upright.

Learn more from [iCanBike!](#)