



Hello, and welcome back for the 2022-23 school year!

Schools are getting back into their familiar routines after a few rocky years and they are ready to go! There is still a bus driver shortage so the need to get kids walking and biking to school is greater than ever. Schools, and parents, are getting very creative as they come up with ways to deal with the shortage. Walking School Buses are popping up everywhere and the kids, and their parents, are finding that walking and biking are now their preferred forms of transportation. Studies show that kids do better in class if they've had some physical activity before arriving. And as a side bonus, they are creating bonds with their fellow walkers and bikers.



New this year are the Transportation Alternatives Program Grants that non-infrastructure programs can now apply for. These are 2-year grants that provide funding for coordinator salaries, educational materials, bikes, helmets, etc. The link to apply and information about the program is on this website. This is a great opportunity to fund your program. This program also funds infrastructure projects so if you need a sidewalk or crosswalk to provide safe travels for your students, this is a great funding source. Applications will open up May of 2023. Check out VDOT's Transportation Alternatives Program website for application information <https://www.virginiadot.org/business/prehancegrants.asp>.

On this website, you'll find the Virginia Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Starter Kit, with tip sheets and guides to help plan events like Walk and Bike to School Day, and template flyers, posters, and other outreach materials to promote Safe Routes to School beyond the classroom. And our Resource Library has materials to help you develop your SRTS program, such as collecting student travel tallies, conducting walk audits, and incorporating SRTS throughout the school year.

Watch for our updated Success Book. We completed the last one in 2020 and documented program history and success stories from the beginning of the program in 2005 until 2020. Plenty has happened since then and we want to make sure to capture it all.

And don't forget that Virginia SRTS also provides Quick Start mini-grants for that one-time event or purchase, and Walkabout mini-grants, where we will provide you with a walking and biking assessment of the area around a school to better inform you of the obstacles that may exist that prevent students from safely walking and biking to school. Make sure to check out grant information and the dates for submitting applications on this website.



Even if you don't apply for one of our grant opportunities, you can still find a lot of useful information that you could apply in some degree to your schools. So let's get started!

Have a great year and get out there and walk, bike or roll!

Sincerely,

Katherine Graham

Katherine Graham
Virginia Safe Routes to School Coordinator