

SAVING LIVES ON TRIBAL ROADS

Community-Driven Traffic Safety Solutions
in Tribal Communities

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WTSC collaborates with Tribal Nations, communities, partners, and other state agencies to achieve **Target Zero** – Washington State’s Strategic Highway Safety Plan of zero deaths and zero serious injuries.



OUR VISION: A Washington where we all work together to travel safely on our roadways.



OUR MISSION: We connect communities and Tribal Nations with resources to build a positive traffic safety culture.



WHAT HAPPENED HERE?

*Look at this crash.
What do you think
contributed?*



wtsc

WASHINGTON
TRAFFIC SAFETY
COMMISSION



WHAT PUT THIS CRASH AT RISK?



SPEED

Driving too fast reduces time to react and increases crash severity.



ALCOHOL

Impaired driving puts everyone at risk.



NO SEATBELTS

Without a seatbelt, the risk of serious injury or death is much higher.



OLDER VEHICLE SAFETY

Older vehicles have fewer safety features and less protection.



RURAL ROADS

Long distances, limited visibility, and fewer resources increase risk.



YOUNG DRIVERS

Lack of experience behind the wheel increases the risk of a crash.



HAVE THINGS CHANGED?

YES: WE'VE MADE PROGRESS



More data

We collect and analyze more data to understand crashes and save lives.



More knowledge

We know more about what causes crashes and what prevents them.



Safer vehicles and systems

Safer vehicles and systems help protect more people than ever before.

WHAT HASN'T CHANGED



Speed still kills

Speed remains a leading factor in fatal crashes.



Impaired driving continues

Alcohol and drug impairment continue to impact our communities.



Rural roads increase risk

Long distances, limited shoulders, and fewer resources remain major challenges.



Young drivers still overrepresented

Young people are still more likely to be in a crash.



Wearing seatbelts

Too many people still don't buckle up.

THE REALITY IN WASHINGTON FOR AI/AN INDIVIDUALS



American Indian and Alaska Native people are disproportionately impacted.



About 2% of the population.



4.4 times higher fatality rate than all other races.



69% of fatal crashes are single vehicle crashes.



28% of fatalities are individuals under age 25.



50% of fatalities are women.



CRASHES ARE **PREDICTABLE** AND PREVENTABLE.

WHY DO I TELL THIS STORY?



BECAUSE WE ARE ALL HUMAN AND ALL MAKE MISTAKES.

And when I talk about data, we need to understand that each dot, each graph tells a story of **lives lost, families changed forever, and communities** changed forever.



**BEHIND EVERY DOT IS A PERSON.
BEHIND EVERY NUMBER IS A NAME.**



WHY THIS MATTERS



Traffic crashes are preventable.



They are one of the leading causes of death in Tribal communities.



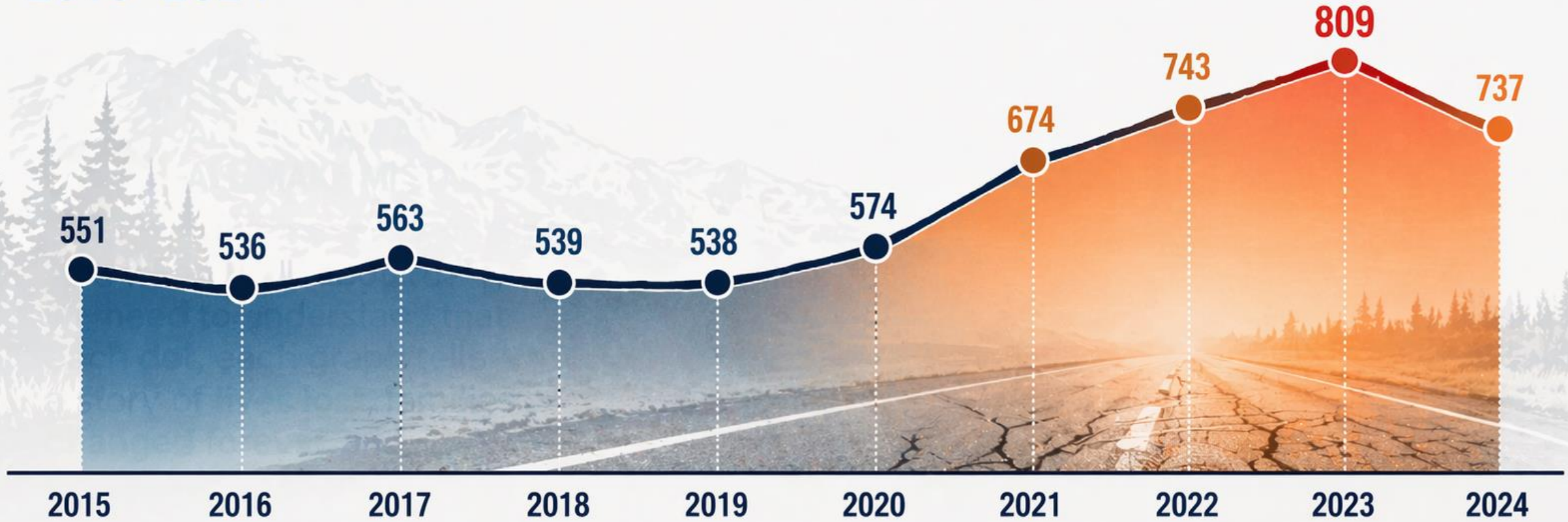
This is about protecting families, culture, and future generations.

***This is not just about roads.
It is about people, families,
and community wellbeing.***



WASHINGTON TRAFFIC FATALITIES

2015–2024



BEHIND EVERY NUMBER IS A LIFE.

Our goal: Zero deaths. Every person. Every road. Every day.



UP 34%
SINCE 2015

Tribal Traffic Fatalities, 2015–2024

Disparities persist on Tribal lands and across the broader transportation system.



BEHIND EVERY NUMBER IS A LIFE.

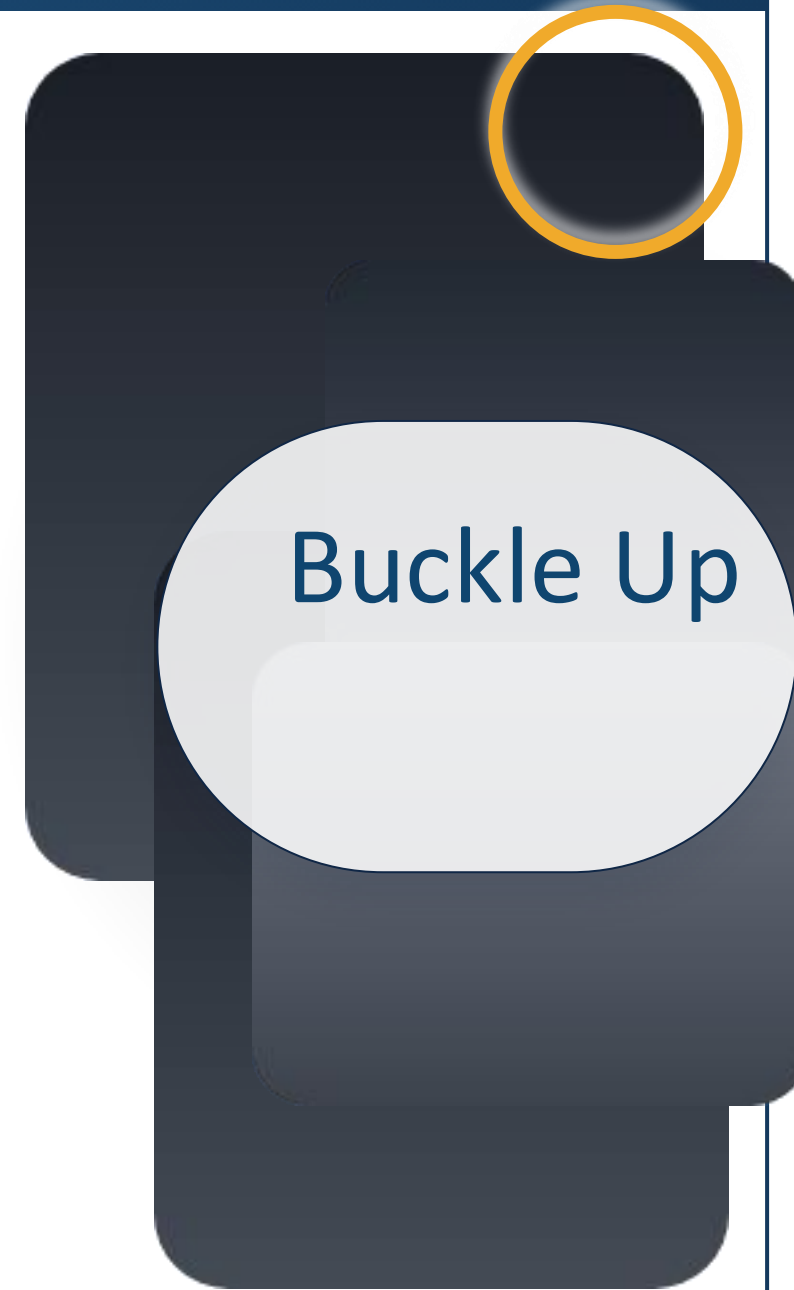
More than half of those killed on Tribal lands were non-Tribal citizens. 36% of AIAN fatal crashes occurred on Tribal lands. Women account for about 50% of AIAN fatalities, and youth under 25 account for 28%.

UP 34%
SINCE 2015

Seatbelts

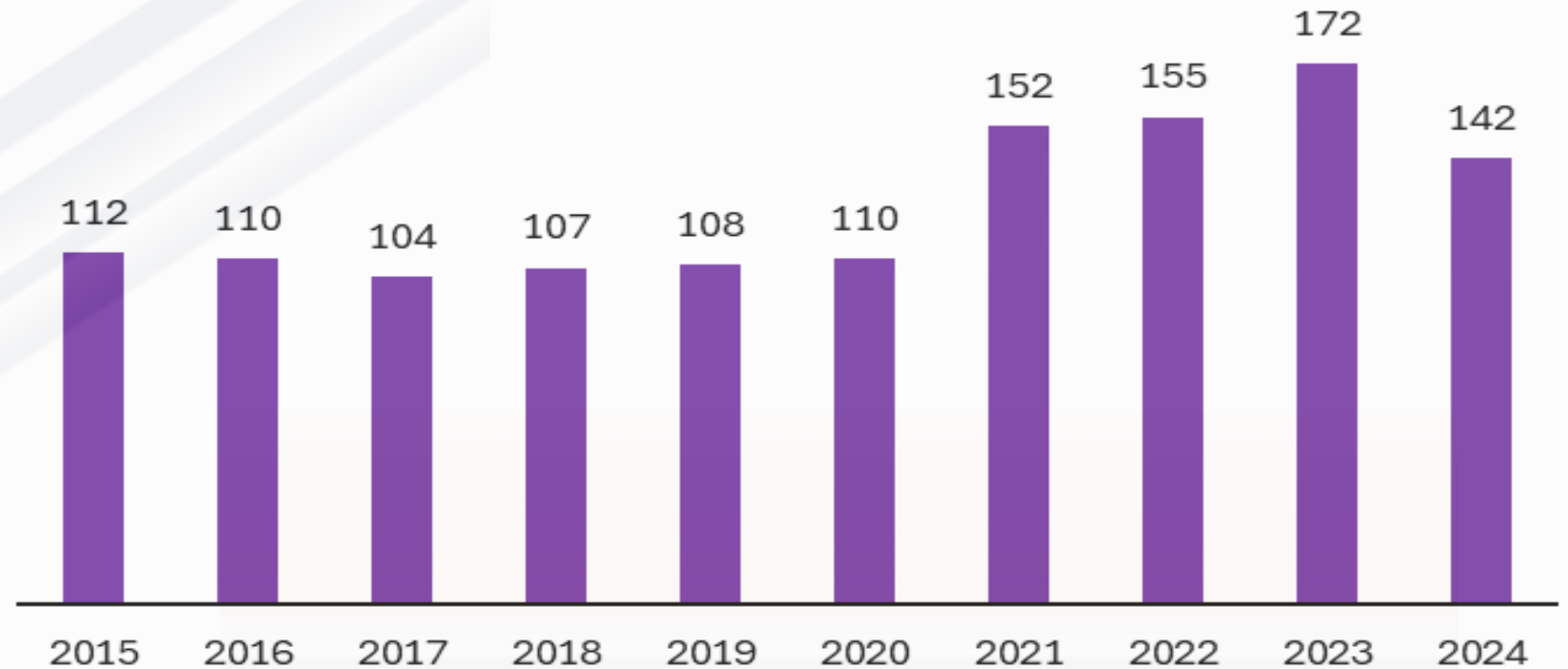
The simplest protection in a crash is also one of the most effective.

Buckle up saves lives.



Washington Unrestrained Vehicle Occupant Traffic Fatalities, 2015-2024

2015–2024



- 59% of AI/AN unrestrained motor vehicle vehicle occupants fatalities were female.
- One in five AI/AN female motor vehicle vehicle passenger fatalities were restrained.

47%

of all fatally injured AI/AN occupants were unrestrained.

6.9x

AI/AN unrestrained fatality rate is 6.9 times higher than other groups.

Impairment

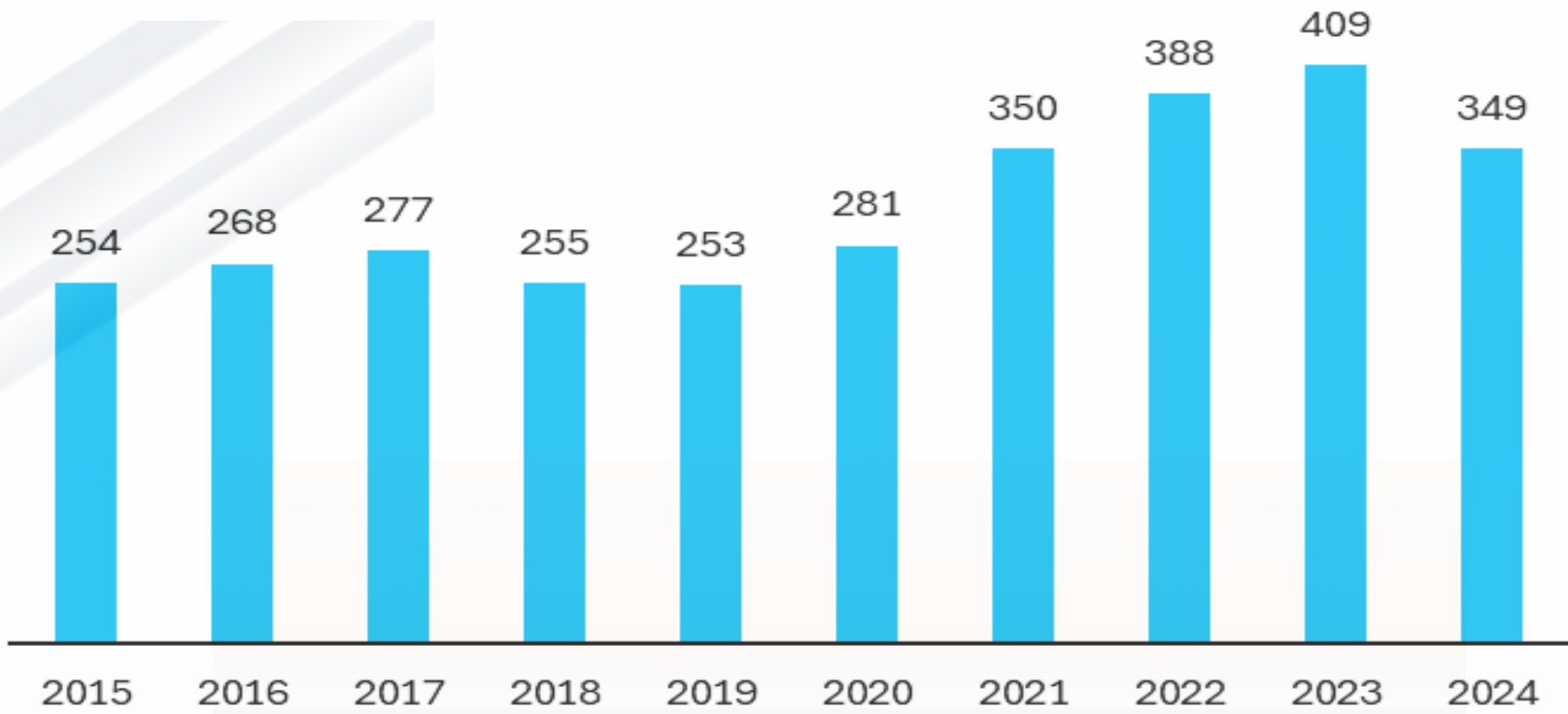
Alcohol and drug impairment reduce reaction time, judgment, and control.

Impairment changes every decision behind the wheel.



Washington Impaired Driver-Involved Traffic Fatalities, 2015-2024

2015-2024



Impairment remains a major factor in AI/AN fatalities.

50%

of all fatalities across Washington State are due to an impaired driver.

5.3x

AI/AN impaired driver involved fatality rate is 5.3 times higher than other groups.

Speed

Higher speed means less time to react and more force in every crash.

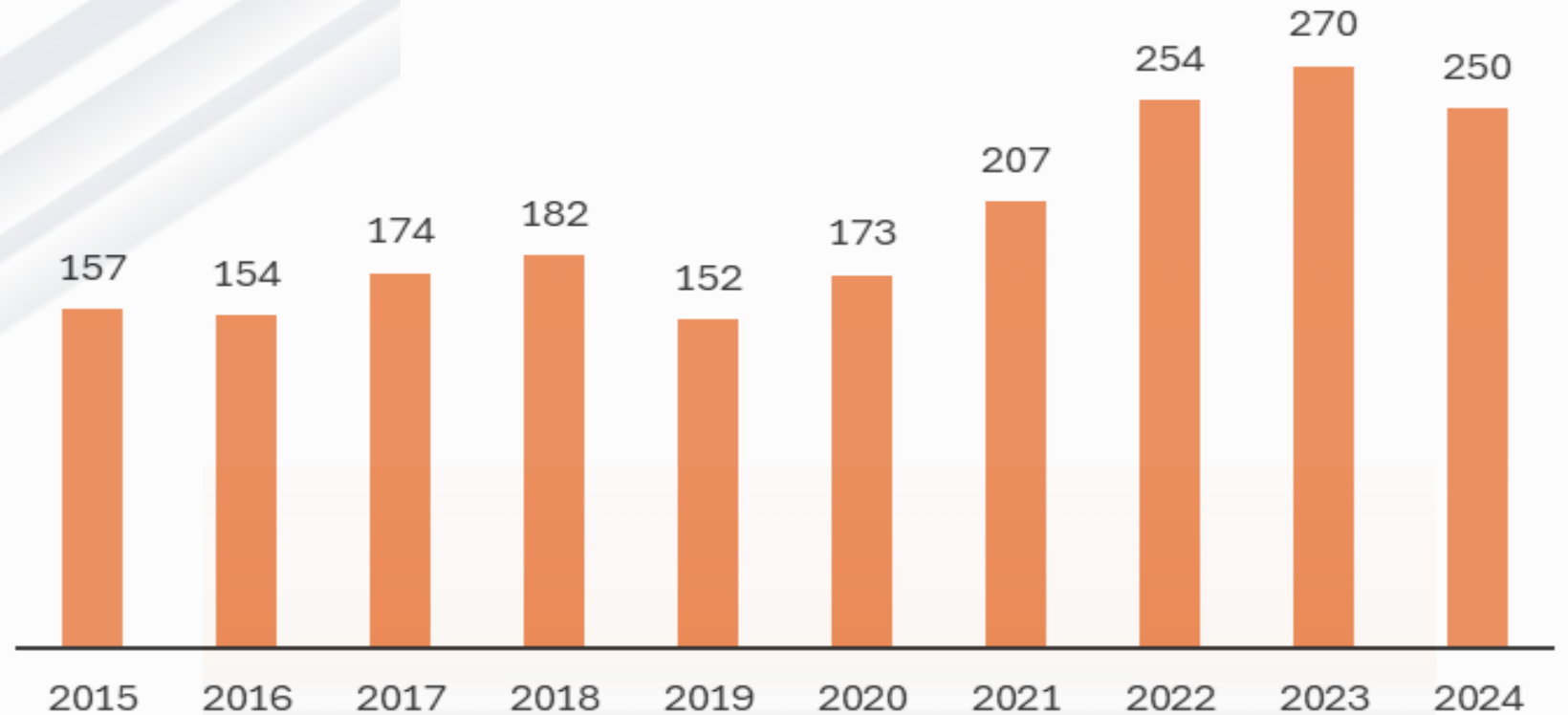
Speed turns mistakes into fatal ones.



Slow Down

Washington Speeding Involved Traffic Fatalities, 2015-2024

2015–2024



79% of AIAN speeding involved fatalities also involved impairment.

24%

of all AIAN fatalities are due to a speeding driver.

3.2x

AI/AN speeding involved fatality rate is 3.2 times higher than other groups.

Transition 4

Distraction

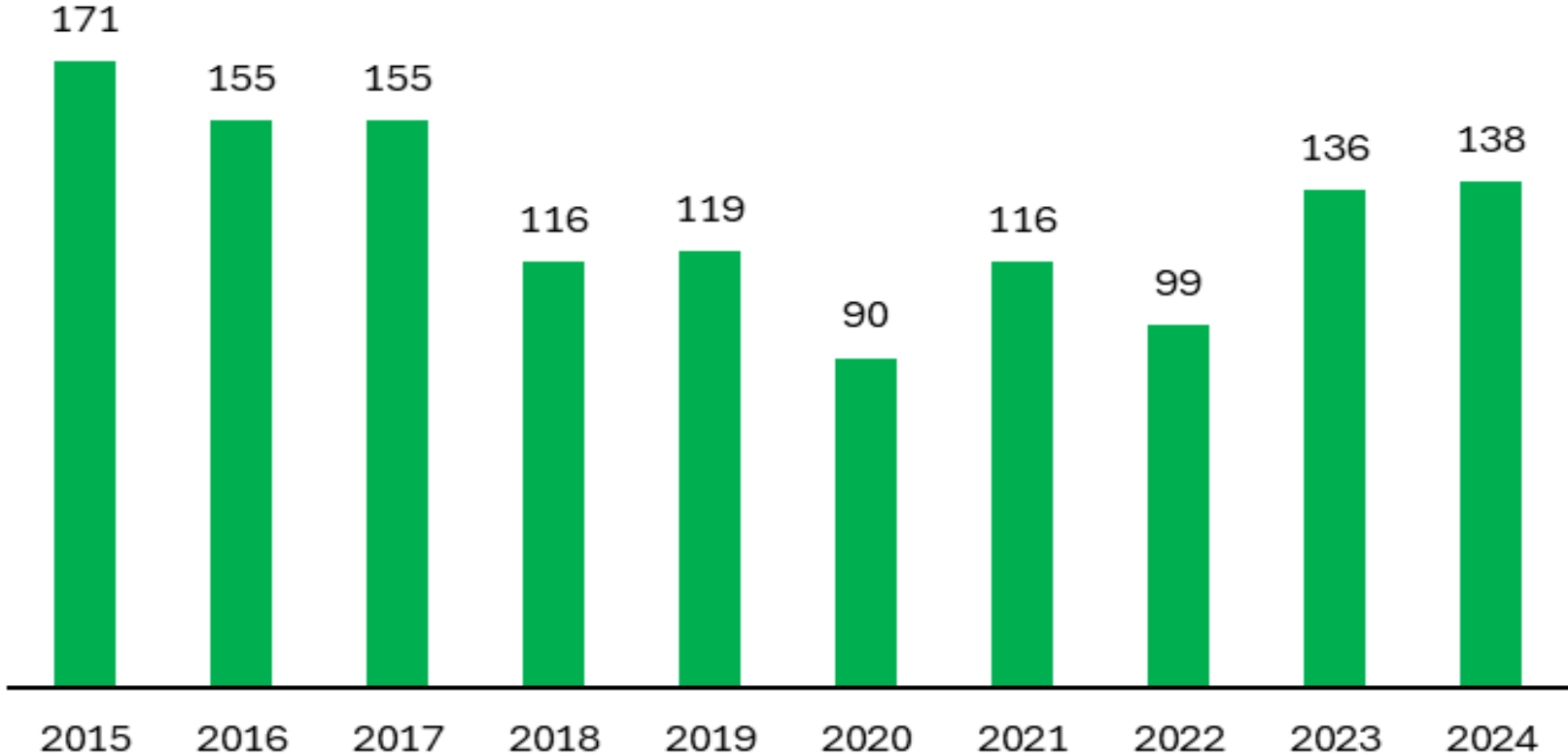
Eyes off the road, hands off the wheel,
attention off the task.

A glance away can change a life.



Washington Distracted Driver-Involved Traffic Fatalities, 2015-2024

2015-2024



Distracted driving the only major crash factor that has shown an overall decline over past 10 year. But fatality rate for this high risk driving behavior is starting to increase.

40%

increase of distracted driver-involved fatalities in last 3 years.

Other distractions not related to device use (cellphone) have significantly increased in past few years.

Young Drivers

Newer drivers face higher risk as experience, judgment, and exposure intersect.

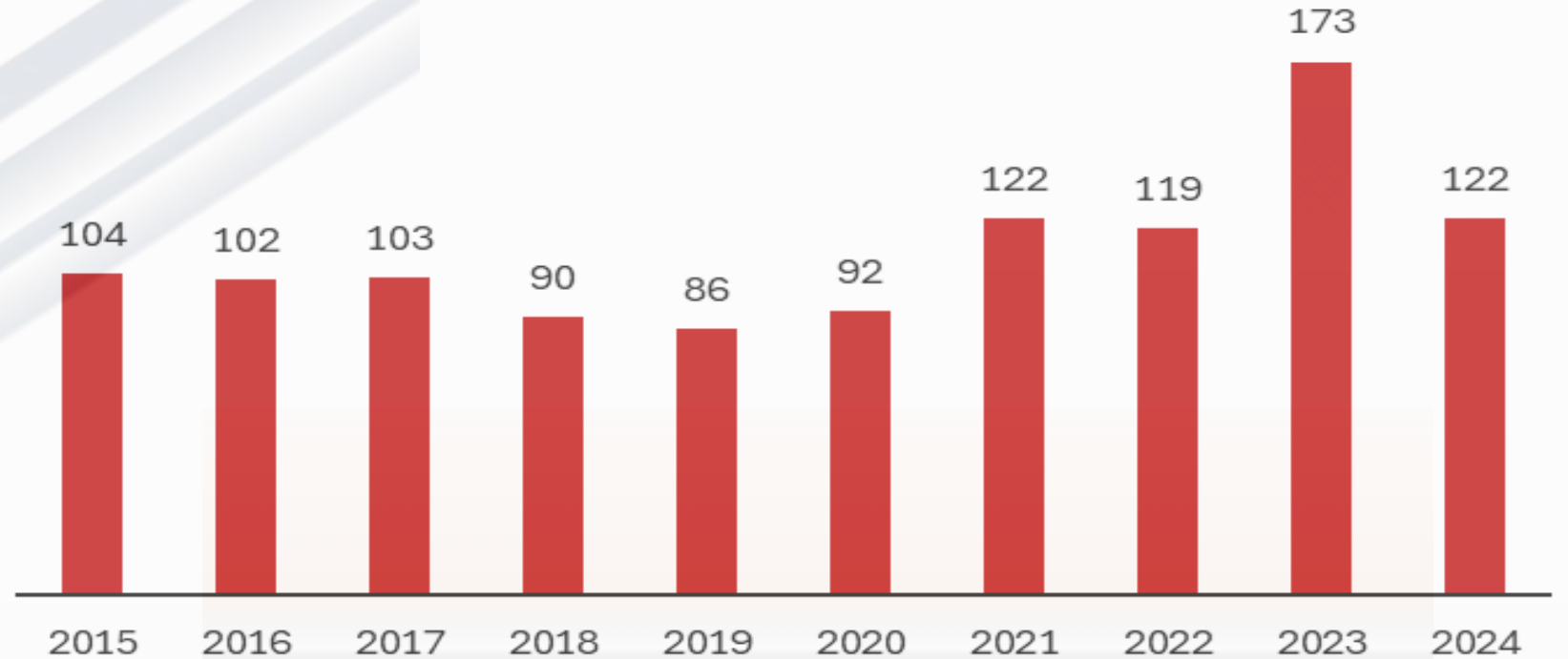


New to the Road

Experience matters on every road.

Washington Traffic Fatalities among 15-24 Year Olds, 2015-2024

2015–2024



A high percentage of AI/AN youth delay licensure until age 18, bypassing driver education courses that teach critical safety skills.

28%

of all AI/AN crash fatalities are under the age of 25.

AI/AN young adults more often engage in risky driving, including impairment, speeding, and not wearing seat belts.

Pedestrians

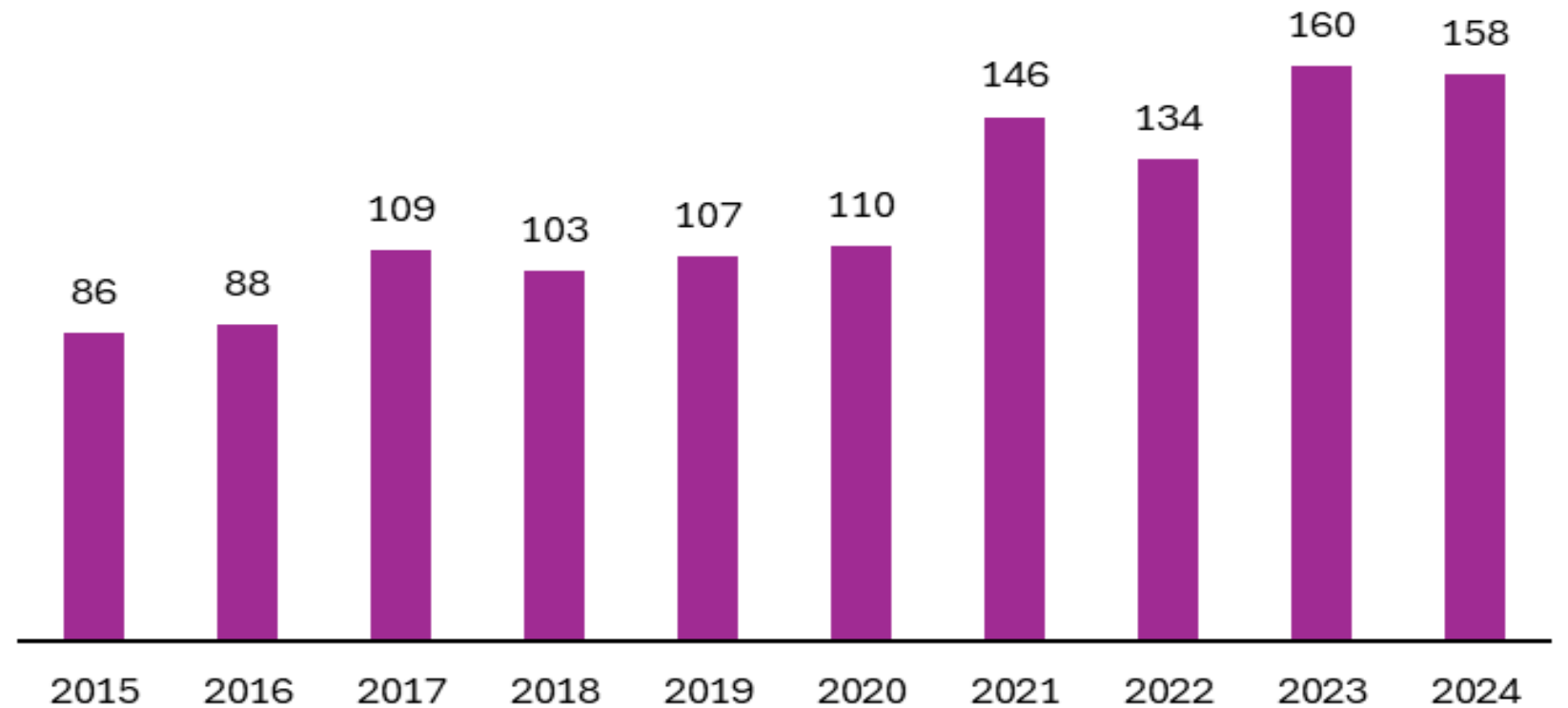
People outside vehicles face the least protection and some of the greatest risk.



Every crossing is a human story.

Washington Traffic Fatalities of Pedestrians, 2015-2024

2015–2024



- Pedestrian deaths in Washington State has increased **84%** in past 10 years.
- Pedestrian impairment was found in **44%** of pedestrian fatalities.

28%

of all AI/AN fatalities
were pedestrians.

5.6x

AI/AN pedestrian
fatality rate is 5.3
times higher than
other groups.

WHAT IT TAKES

to Prevent Serious Injuries and Fatalities



Strong systems make prevention possible.



1. COMMITMENT

Leadership, staffing, training, and sustained support to prioritize traffic safety.



2. COLLABORATION

Tribal leadership, law enforcement, courts, EMS, roads, and community working together.



3. DATA AND EVALUATION

Understanding when, where, and why crashes happen to guide decisions.



4. STRATEGIES ROOTED IN EVIDENCE AND INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

Blending proven approaches with Tribal knowledge, culture, and lived experience.



5. TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Tools, training, and partnerships to build long-term capacity.



STRONG SYSTEMS MAKE PREVENTION POSSIBLE.



Funding Pathways for Tribal Traffic Safety Projects



STATE And FEDERAL FUNDING Partnership with WTSC



State Funding allows flexible use
(equipment allowed)



Funding is available throughout
the year



No formal application-some of the
projects will be grant funding
projects



Contact Tribal Liaison directly

FEDERAL FUNDING



Larger funding opportunities



Formal grant application required



Longer timeline



May require matching funds



Grant support available



STRONG CULTURE. SAFE CHOICES. BRIGHT FUTURES.

Our people today. Our communities tomorrow.

COMMUNITY-LED SOLUTIONS

SAVE LIVES



COMMUNITY-LED SOLUTIONS THAT WORK



CHANGING BEHAVIOR SAVES LIVES



REACHING DRIVERS EARLY



BUILDING A CULTURE OF SAFETY



DESIGNING SAFER ROADS



PROTECTING PEOPLE OUTSIDE THE VEHICLE



STRONG CULTURE. SAFE CHOICES. BRIGHT FUTURES.

Our people today.
Our communities tomorrow.



Tribal Traffic Safety Coordinators

What Makes This Work Different

Not just implementing programs.
Building systems for long-term change.



Grounded in community priorities



Driven by local data



Focused on prevention and education



Connecting leadership, law enforcement, and community



Provide data and information to Tribal Council and partners for proactive decision making



PROACTIVE. DATA-INFORMED. COMMUNITY-LED. Working together to prevent crashes and save lives.

HOW WE DRIVE CHANGE



LISTEN & ENGAGE

We listen to our communities and identify priorities.



COLLECT & ANALYZE DATA

We use local data and insights to understand trends and risks.



INFORM DECISIONS

We provide data and information to Tribal Council and partners for informed, proactive decision making.



IMPLEMENT SOLUTIONS

We apply strategies that fit our communities and address root causes.



MEASURE & IMPROVE

We track results, learn, and continuously improve for the future.



STRONGER TOGETHER. SAFER COMMUNITIES. BETTER FUTURES.



Seatbelt Enforcement and Education

Combining enforcement with community engagement



Dedicated overtime for Tribal Police to support seatbelt enforcement and education



Positive interactions with drivers focused on awareness and safety



Incentives for individuals who are buckled up to reinforce safe behavior



Encouraging seatbelt use through visibility, education, and positive reinforcement.



Tribal Law Enforcement Working for Safer Communities

*Proactive strategies. Strong partnerships.
Safer roads for everyone.*



Publicized Sobriety Checkpoints

Highly visible and publicized checkpoints educate the public and can reduce alcohol-related crash deaths by up to 10%.



Dedicated DUI Patrols

A proactive approach with one or two officers focused on identifying and removing impaired drivers from our roads.



Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) Training

DREs are highly trained officers who can identify drug impairment and provide expert testimony to support safer roads and stronger outcomes.



High Visibility Enforcement (HVE) Patrols

Visible enforcement and targeted patrols deter impaired driving and increase public awareness.



Officer Phlebotomy Programs

Equips officers to safely collect blood samples, improving evidence quality and strengthening impaired driving cases.



Electronic Ticketing & Data Systems

Provides real-time data on crashes, stops, and citations to guide proactive enforcement and community solutions.



Strong communities. Safe roads. A shared responsibility.

Removing Barriers to Seatbelt Use



Why don't some people buckle up?

- Seatbelts may not fit comfortably for everyone
- Barriers can include body size, mobility, pregnancy, or vehicle design



How seatbelt extenders help:

- ✓ Provide additional length for a proper fit
- ✓ Allow the seatbelt to sit correctly across the body
- ✓ Improve comfort and accessibility
- ✓ Make it easier to buckle up every trip



Seatbelt extenders should be used when needed to achieve proper fit and comfort.



**When seatbelts fit,
people are more likely to use them.**



**If it doesn't fit,
people won't use it.
*Fixing fit increases use.***

Child Passenger Safety (CPS) Technicians

Supporting families through education and hands-on assistance



Provide car seat checks and caregiver education



Deliver hands-on support to ensure proper installation



Stay current through ongoing training and certification

Becoming a CPS Technician:

- Complete a 4 day certification course
- Includes classroom learning and hands-on practice
- Final day: community car seat check event
- Must pass written and skills assessments



Building local expertise to keep children safe on our roads

Driver Education Saves Lives



THE CHALLENGE:

Drivers ages 18–25
without driver education
have a

70%

HIGHER RATE
of injury or fatal crashes



THE CHALLENGE:

Drivers ages 18–25 without driver education
have a **70% higher** rate of injury or fatal crashes.



THE SOLUTION: HB 1878

Expanding access to driver education through:



More flexible and virtual learning options



Vouchers for low-income students



Increased access in rural
and Tribal communities



Gradually raising the education requirement
age to 21 by 2030



Expanding access to driver education
is a key prevention strategy.

“ Access to driver education
should not determine safety. ”

Using AI to Understand What's Happening on Tribal Roads

Filling data gaps with real-time insights



Sensors on utility poles capture traffic activity



AI helps identify patterns in speed, volume, and behaviors



Provides visual data to better understand roadway risks



Supports decision-making where data has been limited

WHY THIS MATTERS:



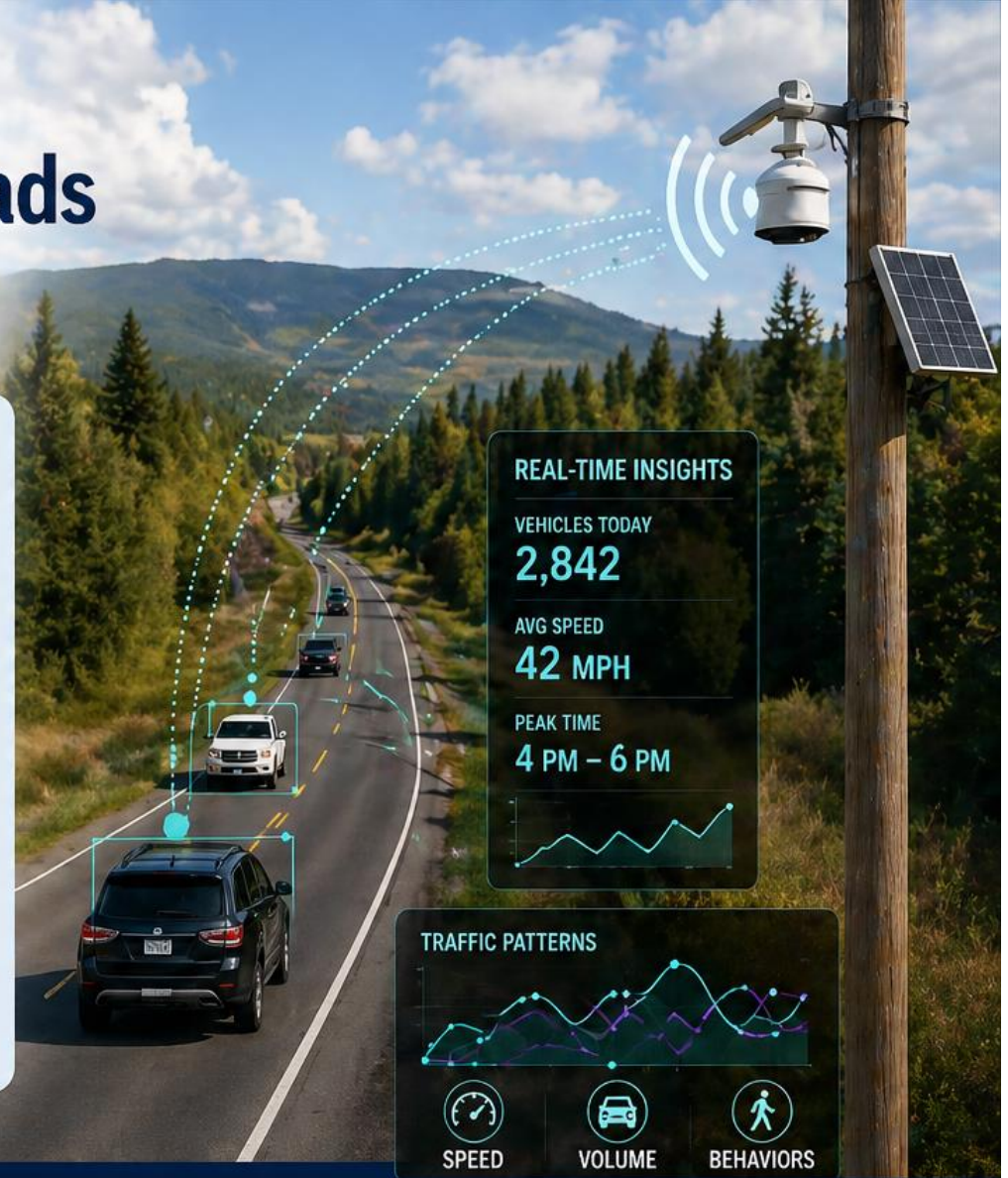
Many Tribal communities lack complete crash data



Helps identify risks before crashes happen



Supports targeted, community-driven solutions



REAL-TIME INSIGHTS

VEHICLES TODAY

2,842

AVG SPEED

42 MPH

PEAK TIME

4 PM - 6 PM



TRAFFIC PATTERNS



SPEED



VOLUME



BEHAVIORS



Better data leads to better decisions and safer roads



Using AI and roadway sensors to see what traditional data misses

Near-Miss Events based on Trajectory Analysis

PET < 1.5 s, TTC < 0.5 s



A large truck making a left turn **stopped** in the middle of US 97 for **20 seconds**

Near-Miss Events based on Trajectory Analysis

Post-Encroachment Time (PET), Time-to-Collision (TTC)

PET = 2.0 s



PET = 1.2 s



Deceleration (60 mph to 20 mph in 1.5 s) to avoid a crash

Quick Builds on Tribal Land

Small changes. Big impact.

Why they work for traffic calming:



Slows speeds

Narrower lanes and visual cues encourage drivers to slow down



Increases safety

Shorter crossing distances and clearer walk areas protect people



Community-driven

Designed with the community, for the community



Cost-effective & flexible

Lower cost, quick to install, easily adjusted over time



QUICK BUILDS CAN INCLUDE:

- Painted crosswalks and curb extensions
- Planters and flexible delineators
- Chicanes and lane narrowing
- Signage and speed feedback



Quick builds create safer streets
and stronger communities.



Built by the community.
Built for the community.
Built to protect our people.

Temporary today.
Safer tomorrow.
Stronger together.

TEENS IN THE DRIVER SEAT

Smart Choices. Safe Roads. Bright Futures.

Teens in the Driver Seat (TDS) empowers young people with the tools, knowledge, and support to make safer choices behind the wheel — and beyond.



TEEN-LED, TEEN-FOCUSED

We connect with teens through relatable messages, engaging activities, and real conversations.



EDUCATION THAT EMPOWERS

From driving skills to decision-making, we focus on what matters most — on and off the road.



REWARDS THAT RECOGNIZE

Earn points for safe choices, complete activities, and climb the All-Stars rewards table!



HOW IT WORKS



COMPLETE
ACTIVITIES



EARN
POINTS



GET REWARDED
All-Stars Rewards

WHAT TEENS LEARN



Be Safe
as a Pedestrian



Make Safe Choices
Every Day



Buckle Up.
Every Time.



Drive Smart.
Stay Focused.



**GET INVOLVED.
EARN REWARDS.**

SIGN UP TODAY!

www.t-driver.com



Youth Education

Building a Culture of Safety, Together

We inspire our youth with education, tradition, and hands-on learning to build safe habits for life.



Indigenous-Inspired Storytelling

We use culture, tradition, and storytelling to share important safety lessons that connect, teach, and inspire.



Coloring Pages for Youth

Fun, age-appropriate pages teach pedestrian and bike safety in a way kids enjoy and remember.



Bike Rodeos

Hands-on activities build skills, confidence, and safe choices—one young rider at a time.



WHAT YOUTH LEARN



Be Safe
as a Pedestrian



Ride Smart
and Predictable



Use the Right
Safety Gear



Make Safe Choices
Every Day



Strong culture. Safe choices. Bright futures. | Our youth today. Our leaders tomorrow.

RESOURCES



Together, we can build safer roads and stronger communities.



Let's Talk Tribal Traffic Safety

Penny Rarick, Tribal Liaison

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Tribal Driver's Education Training Pilot Program

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Teens in the Driver Seat

www.t-driver.com

Empowering youth to make smart choices behind the wheel and beyond.



Car Seats, Posters, Trainings, Rules

<https://wacarseats.com/>

Information and resources to keep children safe on every ride.



Let's Talk
Tribal Traffic Safety



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STRONG CULTURE. SAFE CHOICES. BRIGHT FUTURES.

Our people today. Our communities tomorrow.



TRAFFIC SAFETY
COMMISSION

THANK YOU

Working together for safer communities and brighter futures.



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**TRAFFIC SAFETY
COMMISSION**
Target Zero Together

