

# PROJECT OVERVIEW

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## Equity in Competitive Grantmaking for Safe Routes to School Projects

**Project Summary:** This study examines how communities' demographic characteristics and organizational resources influence their ability to apply for and obtain competitive Safe Routes To School (SRTS) grants. The project will explore potential correlates between capacity in a local public health system, including the availability of local data and organizational partnerships, and the development of successful SRTS grant proposals.

Previous studies have documented significant disparities in rates of students' active transportation to school by household income, race/ethnicity, and characteristics of a local community's social and built environment. This research also suggests that state department of transportation policies may hinder equitable distribution of SRTS funds among local communities to the extent that their funding application procedures create biases toward communities with a greater capacity and resources to plan projects and write grant proposals.

**Relevance to Practice:** This research project fit into a window of opportunity provided by the SRTS State Network's one year of funding to build support for changing how SRTS funds are distributed across the state. The State Network had the momentum needed and the ability to act immediately on the findings. Network members and grant reviewers recognize that communities most in need have been the least competitive for these programs resulting in inequitable distribution of funding. The Network and Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) are committed to using the findings from this research to make immediate changes in the request for applications and funding procedures.

A research report will inform a review of the SRTS grants program to ensure that the application questions and review process is fair, equitable, and aligns with the strategic priorities of the SRTS program. CDOT and the SRTS State Network will use the report to:

- revise the application for SRTS grants as necessary
- provide additional training for grant application reviewers
- produce a guide and technical assistance materials for potential applicants for SRTS funds that will include tools for developing a successful project and application.

**Project Advisory Committee:** The PAC is led by Kyle Legleiter, MPH and includes members from the Colorado School of Public Health's Office of Public Health Practice, faculty from the Colorado School of Public Health and public health professionals from local public health agencies throughout Colorado.

**Project Consultants:** Lorann Stallones, MPH, FACE Director, Colorado Injury Control Research Center

**Research Team:** Public Health Alliance of Colorado through the Colorado Public Health Practice-Based Research Network

**Funding Source:** Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

**Timeframe:** August 2010-December 2010

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