



# **Oregon Friendly Driver: Statewide Program Strategic Plan 2024-2026**

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## **I. Introduction**

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As the Lead Program Administrator for the Oregon Friendly Driver Program, it is our pleasure to share the three-year statewide Strategic Planning document on the following pages. This plan was developed in collaboration with representatives from the Oregon Department of Transportation (Salem), Lane County Council of Governments (Eugene), The Street Trust (Portland), and Commute Options (Bend). The purpose of this plan is to introduce, guide and support the successful growth of the Oregon Friendly Driver Program on a statewide basis for existing and new partner agencies.

Whitney Bennett, Education Program Manager  
Commute Options

## **II. Statewide Program Purpose, Vision, and Values**

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**Purpose:** The purpose behind the Oregon Friendly Driver Program is to increase safety and reduce crashes for vulnerable road users. We will make the road network a safer experience by providing free online course certifications, webinars, and in-person classes. The Oregon Department of Transportation has been funding this program since 2017 to help create safer roads for everyone.

**Vision:** The vision of the Oregon Friendly Driver program is to increase safety and reduce crashes for vulnerable road users by cultivating a culture of safety, respect, and awareness among all road users in Oregon . By offering free in-person classes, webinars, and the online course, the program aims to educate drivers about best practices, laws, and techniques for safer navigation of the road network. Through these initiatives, the program seeks to reduce crashes, injuries, and fatalities on Oregon roads, ultimately making the transportation system safer and more inclusive for everyone. Additionally, the program endeavors to foster a sense of community and responsibility among all road users—people driving, people bicycling, people walking, and rolling, promoting mutual respect and understanding to enhance overall road safety and well-being.

### **Values:**

- **Access for all:** We support the participation of all Oregonians and strive to make our materials available to all (ADA compliant, multiple languages, rural and urban environments, etc.)
- **Oregon Friendly values:** We weave courtesy, awareness, and respect for all road users into every aspect of our instruction.
- **Building confidence:** We empower people driving to navigate the roads with confidence and make safe behavior choices behind the wheel.
- **Creating safe communities:** We foster responsible drivers who contribute to a safer and more enjoyable experience for everyone on Oregon's roads.

## **III. Statewide Program Description and History**

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### **Description:**

In Oregon, from 2017 to 2021, vulnerable users constituted 18.3% of fatalities in motor vehicle crashes. In 2021, 106 vulnerable road users died in traffic crashes marking a historic high. Initial data shows that this number increased by 30% to another historic high of 138 fatalities in 2022. The majority of vulnerable road user fatalities and serious injuries occur on city streets (51%) and state highways (40%); typically along

higher-speed, higher volume roadways, and multi-lane roadways that lack enhanced crossings. Total all user traffic deaths in Oregon have increased during the 5-year study period (2017-2021), while total serious injuries remained somewhat stable between 2017 and 2020 before increasing in 2021. Vulnerable user fatalities and serious injuries are aligned with the increasing trend among all road user fatalities in Oregon. However, preliminary data for 2022 shows a potential increase in the proportion of vulnerable road user fatalities from 18.3% in 2017-2021 to an estimated 23.3% in 2022. While many factors play a role in the cause of crashes and the severity of injuries, such as roadway design and engineering, seasonal inclement weather, and lighting, road user behaviors such as speeding, inattention, alcohol and drug use, and general lack of awareness of laws and best safety behavior practices also play a role. The need for continued driver awareness and education programs such as the Oregon Friendly Driver course is warranted as a countermeasure to decrease motor vehicle crashes involving vulnerable road users.

Research shows that behavior and personal choices influence crash occurrence and severity just as much as roadway design. The Oregon Friendly Driver Program is a statewide effort that helps drivers better understand the rights and responsibilities of people using our streets. Laws and infrastructure designed for people walking, rolling, and bicycling can be confusing for drivers. Scenarios included in our courses help take the confusion out of why these laws exist and how this infrastructure should be used. As a result, participants learn how to be safer, friendlier drivers on Oregon roads. The Oregon Friendly Driver Course takes 60-90 minutes to complete and is delivered through live webinars, an online course, and in-person classes. Participants learn about:

- The safest ways to utilize the roadway network and what makes a friendly driver,
- The rules of the road for people driving, walking, rolling, and bicycling,
- How to avoid common crashes,
- How people walking, rolling and bicycling use the road and how people driving can respond, and
- How to use roadway features: sharrows, bike lanes, and rapid flashing beacons.

All classes include a pre- and post-test and those who successfully complete the course receive an Oregon Friendly Driver Certificate.

### **History:**

**2017.** The Oregon Department of Transportation began developing and then funded the Oregon Friendly Driver pilot program. The class was based on the 2015 Bicycle Friendly Driver program that was inspired by the City of Fort Collins' FC Bikes and Bike Fort Collins, a nonprofit bicycle advocacy and bicycle education organization dedicated to advancing bicycling and other active modes of transportation. Oregon Friendly Driver Program Partners (Commute Options, The Street Trust and the Lane Council of Governments) took the content from Bicycle Friendly Driver and adapted it to be what it is today - geared for people driving to learn what to expect from people walking, rolling, and bicycling and reduce the number of fatalities/severe crashes on the roadway.

**2020.** Oregon Friendly Driver Program partner, Commute Options, developed an online course to increase the reach of the Oregon Friendly Driver Program statewide. The same year, partners started doing Live Webinars in order to continue offering the training during the pandemic.

**2022.** Oregon Friendly Driver received Oregon Department of Education approval as an accredited class for school bus drivers. This recognition incentivizes school bus drivers to take the course to receive their 1.5 hours of credit. In September 2022, a Spanish version of the current online course was also completed and published.

**2024.** In an effort to broaden statewide implementation and sustainably grow and evolve the Oregon Friendly Driver Program, Oregon Department of Transportation contracted Commute Options to serve as the Lead Program Administrator. Working with existing and new contractors and partners in the state, Commute Options looks to expand the program to engage new audiences in a greater number of communities and to educate people who drive on what to expect from the rapidly growing electric micro mobility trend (including electric bicycles, electric scooters, and other motorized/electrified small mobility devices). A new online course in English and Spanish will be completed by September 2024.

**Funding History.** Between 2018-2024, the Oregon Department of Transportation provided a total of \$947,316 in funding for the Oregon Friendly Driver Program. Annual funding for this important statewide program has increased from \$64,912 in 2018 to \$330,000 in 2024.

#### **IV. Statewide Program Goals and Strategies**

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##### **Goal 1: Develop and coordinate marketing strategies for the statewide Oregon Friendly Driver [OFD] Program.**

###### **Strategies:**

<b>A.</b> Develop and utilize an annual marketing strategy with a clear set of marketing goals and KPIs to grow and monitor engagement statewide for OFD.
<b>B.</b> Identify target audiences (including recertification), sectors, and regions to focus marketing efforts and program development for OFD.
<b>C.</b> Create collaborative marketing materials to use with partner programs to cross promote OFD as applicable statewide.
<b>D.</b> Increase representation of OFD at industry-related conferences and events across Oregon with the intent of learning about and collaborating with other programs as well as promoting OFD statewide.

##### **Goal 2: Identify and begin to address gaps and barriers in who we reach, and how, in order to expand the OFD Program on a statewide basis.**

###### **Strategies:**

<b>A.</b> Expand into all ODOT regions by training and coordinating with new statewide partners and offering OFD training to a broad range of institutions, venues, and audiences in their communities.
<b>B.</b> Improve materials and courses to ensure successful access in English and Spanish, as well as ADA accessibility.
<b>C.</b> Introduce OFD education into schools to reach high school age students that are not attending driver education classes, college students not yet employed, family members not in the workforce, older drivers, and others.
<b>D.</b> Improve the effectiveness of delivery by adapting content and materials to the needs of populations in different communities.

**Goal 3: Identify, develop, and integrate educational content and materials in response to legislation and safety needs on a statewide basis.**

**Strategies:**

<b>A.</b> Develop and add electric micromobility materials to the current course.
<b>B.</b> Develop and add additional pedestrian materials to the current course.
<b>C.</b> Perform a comprehensive review of current and emerging needs and update online and in-person educational content and materials every two years.

**Goal 4: Sustainably grow and evolve the statewide implementation of the OFD Program by increasing the number of courses taught and individuals enrolled by a minimum of 10% annually.**

**Strategies:**

<b>A.</b> Commute Option will serve as the Lead Program Administrator responsible for supporting existing contractors/partners, recruiting and training new contractors/partners, and streamlining the growth of the program statewide.
<b>B.</b> On a quarterly basis, Commute Options will track, analyze, report, and communicate the growth of the OFD Program statewide, including: the number of partners; geographic representation of partners; increases in sign-ups due to our different marketing strategies; effectiveness of our materials based on pre- and post-tests; and any changes integrated as a result of feedback.

**V. Executing, Monitoring, and Changing the Statewide Program Plan**

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As the Lead Program Administrator, Commute Options will hold responsibility for administering and coordinating the Oregon Friendly Driver Program in accordance with this statewide plan. The administration and coordination will include outreach and public awareness activities, engagement with interested communities, presenting the course to diverse audiences, training partners on course material, contracting with partners to deliver course presentations, and serving as the central hub of communication between ODOT, contractors, partners, and the public.

On a quarterly basis, Commute Options will track, report, and communicate the growth of the Oregon Friendly Driver Program to ODOT and all OFD partners. This strategic plan will be formally reviewed and updated in collaboration with ODOT and all OFD partners on an annual basis.



## Statewide Strategic Plan 2024-2026

**PROGRAM PURPOSE:** The purpose behind the Oregon Friendly Driver Program is to increase safety and reduce crashes for vulnerable road users. We will make the road network a safer experience by providing free online course certifications, webinars, and in-person classes.

**PROGRAM VISION:** The vision of the Oregon Friendly Driver program is to increase safety and reduce crashes for vulnerable road users by cultivating a culture of safety, respect, and awareness among all road users in Oregon. By offering free in-person classes, webinars, and the online course, the program aims to educate drivers about best practices, laws, and techniques for safer navigation of the road network. The program endeavors to foster a sense of community and responsibility among all road users—people driving, people bicycling, people walking, and rolling, promoting mutual respect and understanding to enhance overall road safety and well-being.

**VALUES:** Access for all \* Oregon friendly values \* Building confidence \* Creating safe communities

**GOAL 1:** Develop and coordinate marketing strategies for the statewide Oregon Friendly Driver Program.

- A.** Develop and utilize an annual marketing strategy with a clear set of marketing goals and KPIs to grow and monitor engagement statewide for OFD.
- B.** Identify target audiences (including recertification), sectors, and regions to focus marketing efforts and program development for OFD.
- C.** Create collaborative marketing materials with partner programs to cross promote OFD as applicable statewide.
- D.** Increase representation of OFD at industry-related conferences and events across Oregon with the intent of learning about and collaborating with other programs as well as promoting OFD statewide.

**GOAL 2:** Identify and begin to address gaps and barriers in who we reach and how in order to expand the OFD Program statewide.

- A.** Expand into all ODOT regions by training and coordinating with new statewide partners and offering OFD training to a broad range of institutions, venues, and audiences in their communities.
- B.** Improve materials and courses to ensure successful access in English and Spanish, as well as ADA accessibility.
- C.** Introduce OFD education into schools to reach high school age students that are not attending driver education classes, college students not yet employed, family members not in the workforce, older drivers, and others.
- D.** Improve the effectiveness of delivery by adapting content and materials to the needs of populations in different communities.

**GOAL 3:** Identify, develop, and integrate educational content and materials in response to legislation and safety needs on a statewide basis.

- A.** Develop and add electric micromobility materials to the current course.
- B.** Develop and add additional pedestrian materials to the current course.
- C.** Perform a comprehensive review of current and emerging needs and update online and in-person educational content and materials every two years.

**GOAL 4:** Sustainably grow and evolve the statewide implementation of the OFD Program by increasing the number of courses taught and individuals enrolled by a minimum of 10% annually.

- A.** Commute Option will serve as the Lead Program Administrator supporting existing contractors/partners, recruiting and training new contractors/partners, and streamlining program growth statewide.
- B.** On a quarterly basis, Commute Options will track, analyze, report, and communicate the growth of the OFD Program statewide.