



January 2015

**Coordinator's Corner**

**Happy New Year!** I am writing to share some exciting Safe Routes to School funding opportunities to get the year started off right, and remind you about Crossing Guard Appreciation Day on February 11.

VDOT has just announced another year of Non-Infrastructure Grant funding. These grants for amounts between \$5,000 and \$100,000 can be used to fund SRTS-related activities and programs, including a SRTS coordinator. More information about the application requirements is included below.



Two other popular SRTS funding opportunities - the QuickStart Mini-grant program and the Walkabout Mini-grant program - are both continuing through the spring. Learn more about them and how to apply in the right hand column under the Calendar.

I hope one or more of these opportunities is right for your Safe Routes to School program. Explore them each in more detail below and on the Virginia Safe Routes to School [website](#). As always, please don't hesitate to contact us via the hotline, 1-855-601-7787, or by email, [info@virginiarts.org](mailto:info@virginiarts.org) if you have any questions.

Lastly, please remember to nominate your crossing guard for Virginia's Most Outstanding Crossing Guard Award by **Monday, January 19**. The winners will be announced on February 6, 2015. Are you looking for a unique way to honor your crossing guard in addition to nominating them for an award? Read more about the Prince William County Crossing Guard Bureau and their 50th Anniversary celebration below.

Regards,

Rob Williams  
Virginia SRTS Coordinator

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**CALENDAR**

**JANUARY**

19: Outstanding Crossing Guard Nominations Close

**FEBRUARY**

11: Crossing Guard Appreciation Day  
12: QuickStart Mini-grant Application Due  
28: Last day to submit Activities & Programs Plan for optional review

**MARCH**

12: QuickStart Mini-grant Application Due  
31: Non-Infrastructure Grant Application Due

**APRIL**

9: QuickStart Mini-grant Application Due  
22: Earth Day

Let us know about SRTS events in your community! Click [here](#) to send your information so we can include it in our calendar.

## Crossing Guard Appreciation Day is February 11, 2015

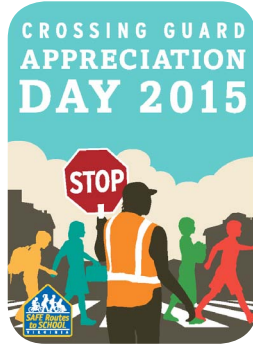
Crossing Guard Appreciation Day is a statewide event devoted to saying 'thank you' to those who help students cross the street safely on their way to and from school.

As part of the celebration, the Virginia SRTS Program sponsors annual Outstanding Crossing Guard Awards. Do you know a crossing guard that deserves special recognition? Nominate him or her online before **January 19, 2015**. Winners will be announced on February 6, 2015, to allow a few days for planning an event.

Check out the [Crossing Guard Appreciation Day webpage](#) to get ideas for your event, download flyer and poster templates, and print thank you cards that students, parents and administrators can sign.

The Virginia SRTS Program has designated the second Wednesday of February as Crossing Guard Appreciation Day, but we encourage schools and communities to plan their own events on any day that works for them.

For example, this year the [Prince William County Crossing Guard Bureau](#) is celebrating its 50th anniversary throughout the spring with memorabilia displays, a Crossing Guards Night Out at a Potomac Nationals baseball game (complete with ceremonial first pitch!) and a 50th Anniversary Dinner Reception open to all of its former and current crossing guards.



The Bureau started with just four crossing guards in Manassas and has grown to 89 crossing guards serving 44 schools throughout Prince William County today.



2014

The Bureau estimates it helped 1.1 million students perform 28,232 safe crossings during the 2013-2014 school year. In addition, the Crossing Guard Bureau conducted 310 meetings with School Safety Patrol groups at schools throughout the division. The School Safety Patrol program was started by members of the Bureau in the late 1970's.



1974

*Special thanks to Lieutenant A. Marie Snyder and Sergeant Michelle Wheeler for providing the information and photos for this story.*



1964

## Non-Infrastructure Grants and Activities & Programs Plans

**What are Non-Infrastructure Grants and Activity & Program Plans?**

VDOT has just announced another year of Safe Routes to School Non-Infrastructure (Activities and Programs) Grants, with applications due by March 31. These grants, for amounts between \$5,000 and \$100,000 can be used to fund education, encouragement, evaluation and

enforcement programs related to Safe Routes to School. The Non-Infrastructure Grant can also be used to fund a SRTS coordinator. A SRTS Coordinator is a part- or full-time SRTS advocate who works with, or within, the school division to promote and facilitate Safe Routes to School activities at a minimum of three schools. Detailed information about eligible applicants and activities can be found in the Virginia SRTS [Program Guidelines](#).

### How do I apply for a Non-Infrastructure Grant?

The first step is to complete a SRTS Activities & Programs Plan (APP). The APP is the first phase of any SRTS effort and outlines a school or community's intentions for making travel to and from school safer and more sustainable. It's a great way to organize programs, projects, and people in support of SRTS. Once complete, the Activities and Program Plan also serves as a legacy document for new people becoming part of the school's SRTS program. The Virginia APP Reference Guide and Template, containing the relevant information needed in order to complete an APP, are available on the Virginia SRTS [website](#).

[LTACs](#) will once again be available to review your draft or final APP. The APP should be submitted to your LTAC via email by February 28th. APPs will be reviewed as they are received, but a response will be provided within two weeks of the request. Those received by February 28th will be guaranteed a response by March 11th, and those submitted well in advance of the deadline will likely have a quicker turnaround time.

Once your APP is complete, you will submit it through our online grant application system as the first step in the completion of your application. Please note that the Non-Infrastructure Grant Application will draw from information contained in the Activities and Programs Plan, but also requires detailed cost estimates for the submitted programs and activities. Applicants seeking funding for a local coordinator will also need to describe her/his intended role in the SRTS program.

The grant application system will be open for submissions on March 1. All applications must be substantially complete and submitted by March 31.

### Important Dates:

- **February 28:** Deadline for optional review of APP
- **March 1:** Online Non-Infrastructure Grant Application system opens for submissions
- **March 31:** Non-Infrastructure Grant Application Due

### Where can I find more information?

Please read the Virginia SRTS [Program Guidelines](#) and visit the VDOT [Activities and Programs Plan webpage](#) for the APP template, a FAQ sheet and more information.

## QuickStart Mini-grants

### What is a QuickStart Mini-grant?

QuickStart Mini-grants are \$1,000 grants for schools that are interested in funding a small (or large) Safe Routes to School activity. These grants are easy to apply for and are a great way to start up a SRTS program!



*Walk to School Day at Cardinal Forest Elementary School, West Springfield*

### How can a QuickStart Mini-grant be used?

QuickStart Mini-grants may be used to fund a range of activities that encourage and enable children to safely walk and bicycle to school, including activities that: Encourage safe walking, bicycling, and driving habits, Increase the number of students walking and bicycling to school, and occur within 90 days of award.

The Virginia Safe Routes to School program encourages applicants to use the creativity of student and adult leaders to identify issues and propose safe walking and bicycling activities that address them.



*Bicycle Safety Program at Minnick Education Center, Harrisonburg*

Check out the [QuickStart Mini-grants webpage](#) to see a list of eligible items and learn more about the activities funded to date.

### When and where can I apply for a QuickStart Mini-grant?

The upcoming spring 2015 due dates are:

- **February 12**
- **March 12**
- **April 9**

However, applications are evaluated in the order they are received (hint: apply early!) You can apply for a QuickStart Mini-grant online through this [link](#).

### Walkabouts

#### What is a Walkabout?

A Walkabout is a walking and bicycling audit led by the [Local Technical Assistance Coordinator \(LTAC\)](#) serving your region. Applying for a Walkabout Mini-grant is a great way to bring together school and community stakeholders to learn about the walking and bicycling environment around a school, share perspectives, build consensus and start identifying potential solutions.

Schools that participate in Walkabouts receive a Walkabout Report that includes photos of the area around the school, an overview of walking and bicycling conditions, and descriptions of locations for improvements. Planning level cost estimates may also be included in the report if the applicant intends to apply for a specific funding opportunity such as a [TAP grant](#).

Grant applications for SRTS-related infrastructure projects have been submitted for November 2013 and 2014 TAP grant cycles. Two of the four Virginia schools that participated in a Walkabout and applied for TAP grants in November 2013 were tentatively allocated funding for fiscal year 2015 to improve the infrastructure around their schools.

- **Rocky Gap Elementary School**, in partnership with Bland County, applied for a TAP grant to fund new sidewalks on the road closest to the school, connecting to the other edge of town. In addition to adding a sidewalk, this project will be part of the town's plan for a new shared-use greenway.
- **Jackson Via Elementary School**, along with the City of Charlottesville, applied for a TAP grant to build bicycle and pedestrian improvements including bike lanes, crosswalks, curb ramps, and new sidewalks to fill in gaps in the existing network.



*Participants during a Walkabout at Walker Upper Elementary School, Charlottesville*

### Wow, I think my school would really benefit from a Walkabout. What should I do next?

You can see a sample report and learn more about Walkabouts on the [School Travel Plans and Grants webpage](#).

There you will also find the link to apply for a Walkabout Mini-grant [online](#). Apply now to be eligible for one of three Walkabouts this spring!

