

*New Hampshire SRTS News, June 2008:*

Encouraging Safe Bicycling and Walking to School

## **Round 2 Attracts Applications from 26 Communities**

[Start Planning](#)

[Walk-to-School Day](#)

[Publicize Your School's Program](#)

[No Spam](#)

Communities across New Hampshire are stepping up to make it safer for elementary school children to walk and ride bicycles to school.

A total of **26 localities** that are home to **46 affected schools** have applied for reimbursement funding in the **Round 2 funding cycle** for Safe Routes to School (SRTS). They have applied for a total of about **\$1.5 million**. Half of the applications seek startup funding of up to \$5,000.

Round 2 applications are currently being reviewed and scored by the Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs). Next, the Statewide Advisory Committee (SAC) will hold a public meeting with applicants on July 21, 2008. Committee members will score applications and make a recommendation to N.H. Department of Transportation (NHDOT) Commissioner George N. Campbell. An announcement of awards is expected in late summer 2008.

SRTS provides **100 percent federal reimbursement** for local programs encouraging and enabling children in kindergarten through eighth grade, including youngsters with disabilities, to make the commute from home to school under their own power. The program primarily serves students who live within approximately two miles of school. It is managed by the NHDOT in partnership with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

New Hampshire is scheduled to receive \$5 million over a five-year period that began here in November 2006. NHDOT awarded more than \$477,000 in Round 1, announced in 2007. **Round 3** has not yet been scheduled, but the department anticipates that it will begin accepting applications again **in late fall or early winter 2008**.

Skyrocketing fuel costs, the epidemic of childhood overweight and obesity, and concerns about air pollution and global warming are converging to make walking and pedaling attractive and healthy alternatives to rides in private vehicles for the short distance to school.

“With gasoline around four dollars a gallon, it no longer makes sense for parents to spend time idling in backed-up traffic to drop their kids off at school,” said John Corrigan, the state’s SRTS coordinator.

[Back to top](#)

## Start Planning Now

Local leaders who are interested in the program are **strongly urged to begin planning and community organizing efforts as soon as possible**. It will be very difficult to form a SRTS task force and prepare a grant application if you wait for an application period to begin.

Between May and early June, initial local meetings were held with leaders in **Jackson, Moultonborough, Newton, and Bradford**. In these sessions, the coordinator uses a PowerPoint presentation to give an **overview of the program, answers any questions, and engages in a discussion of local conditions affecting walking and bicycling**. Most participating communities then work with the RPCs, which can provide technical assistance and help with preparing an application for reimbursement funding.

Under published scoring criteria, applications are given points for each of the “5Es” of the program:

**Evaluation**  
**Education**  
**Encouragement**  
**Enforcement**  
**Engineering**

Successful applications demonstrate strong local commitment to providing safe places for walking and bicycle riding, teaching children safe walking and bicycling practices, encouraging them to get around under their own power, and cracking down on unsafe driving in school zones.

Extensive information about the program is available on the state’s [SRTS Web site](#).

[Back to top](#)

## International Walk-to-School Day

One of the best ways to get a SRTS program started is to participate in International Walk-to-School Day. The official day is **Oct. 8, 2008**, but schools are encouraged to sponsor an event any day that month.

Here is an announcement from the National Center for Safe Routes to School:

CHAPEL HILL, NC — Registration is open for 2008 International Walk to School, an international event where communities from over 40 countries join together to walk and bicycle to school. Walk to School Day is October 8, 2008.

Registration is free and available to individuals or organizations holding a Walk to School event in the US. To register a Walk to School event, please visit [www.walktoschool.org/register](http://www.walktoschool.org/register). Registered schools will be displayed on an interactive U.S. map on the U.S. Walk to School Web site, where neighboring communities, media and other organizations will be able to view participating schools.

By registering, Walk to School organizers have access to a variety of downloadable materials, including certificates, templates for printing stickers and a frequent walker punch card. Registrants can also subscribe to receive a weekly Walk to School e-newsletter with tips and resources on holding a Walk to School event.

For more information on Walk to School activities in the U.S., please visit [www.walktoschool.org](http://www.walktoschool.org). To see photos from last year's event, please visit [www.iwalktoschool.org/photos/index.htm](http://www.iwalktoschool.org/photos/index.htm) (The Web site includes photos from **Nashua, Andover** and **Farmington**.)

The National Center for Safe Routes to School of the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center serves as the national coordinating agency for Walk to School activities in the U.S. For more information, please visit [www.saferoutesinfo.org](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org)

For more information, visit: <http://www.walktoschool.org/>

[Back to top](#)

## Help Spread the Word

**Is your community doing something creative** to encourage safe walking and bicycling to school? Do students participate in a walking school bus or rolling bike train? Is your town marking a bike route or improving a path from a neighborhood to school? Are you holding a bicycle rodeo or bringing in an instructor for a day of safety lessons?

Your efforts can inspire other communities, and **we'd like to recognize the people at the community level who make SRTS work**. Visit our Web site and look at the new

photo page for the walking school bus and walking audit for the town of **Weare** for an example. Please contact the [coordinator](#) if you have something scheduled.

[Back to top](#)

## **No Spam**

Please feel free to forward this newsletter to anyone who might be interested in SRTS. Contact the coordinator if you would like to be added to the e-mail distribution list or if you prefer to be removed.

[Back to top](#)

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