



Operation Lifesaver Announces Grants to Eight Transit Agencies for Public Safety Campaigns

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Eight innovative transit rail safety projects will teach riders, drivers and pedestrians around the country some valuable lessons on interacting safely with transit tracks, thanks to nearly \$194,000 in grants [Operation Lifesaver](#) (OLI) awarded today. In partnership with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), OLI ran a fiercely competitive grant program over the spring and summer with close to 20 transit agencies vying for funding.

"We were blown away at the response to our grant announcement," said OLI President and CEO Joyce Rose. "With a record 10.5 billion trips taken on public transportation in 2012, it is an important time to expand Operation Lifesaver's safety messages in the transit community. We were pleased to see so many exciting transit safety campaign proposals. We want to thank the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) for helping us get the word out about this funding."

The FTA, a national partner and advisor of Operation Lifesaver, provides the funding for the grants.

"The Federal Transit Administration is pleased to partner with Operation Lifesaver because as rail transit expands in communities across the country, it is essential that drivers and pedestrians have the education they need to remain safe near trains, tracks and at rail crossings," said FTA Administrator Peter Rogoff.

The winning projects selected to receive a share of the funding include:

- [TriMet](#), Portland, Ore., will target millennial male pedestrian and transit riders through a safety marketing campaign to include Facebook and online ads, as well as nontraditional print and television public service announcements (PSAs).
- The [Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority](#) (MBTA), Boston, will spread safety awareness messages along its light rail Green Line, which serves a highly dense mix of residential and commercial areas with schools, offices, restaurants and nightlife venues. It's where 62 percent of the system's trolley and auto collisions occur. The MBTA will run digital and social media ads and create and share video PSAs. The agency will also create educational materials for use at college fairs.
- [Caltrain](#), the San Mateo County, Calif., Transit District, will conduct a safety awareness campaign targeting unsafe behaviors by drivers and pedestrians near rail tracks. The campaign will include rail safety videos, produced locally by youths who are right now attending a transit safety video production camp run by Fresh Takes, a youth digital arts program. The agency will also work with teens and schools to provide rail safety presentations and will host a Rail Safety Month film festival.
- Central Florida's new [SunRail](#) commuter rail service begins operations in early 2014. [Florida Operation Lifesaver](#) is working with SunRail to develop an education program for local law enforcement officials in communities along the SunRail corridor. This training program will teach local police how to help keep commuters, residents and visitors safe through effective enforcement of railroad crossing and anti-trespassing laws.
- Denver's [Regional Transportation District](#) (RTD) aims to reduce pedestrian trespassing and related deaths and injuries through community awareness workshops and events, staff training programs and increased safety signage.
- [Capital Metro](#), Austin, Tex., will target middle school students, including those who are English language learners, by blitzing them with educational materials, a youth-produced video and a 15-month outreach campaign involving peer mentors and lesson plans for educators, a new website and school outreach events.
- [Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit](#) (SMART) is a new rail transit service in the North Bay Region of California slated to start running test trains in 2014. With OLI and other partners, SMART plans to produce a monthly newspaper aimed at school-aged children, a safety-oriented website, an interactive safety video game, video and radio PSAs, social media ads, transit bus and bus shelter ads and billboards. In addition, SMART will translate educational material, create a student rail safety ambassador program, create a Girl and Boy Scout merit badge and provide additional outreach to homeless populations.
- The [D.C. Department of Transportation](#) is developing a school-based safety curriculum and outreach campaign in support of the new [DC Streetcar](#), which begins operations at the end of the year. Educational materials will be distributed to schools along the streetcar route. The project also includes an interactive website, safety materials for parents and teens and a series of community events to raise awareness of safety around streetcars.

To compete for grants, which totaled up to \$25,000 apiece and required matching funds from non-federal partners, proposals had to focus on safety education or public awareness initiatives. They must use OLI-approved materials and logos and be coordinated through a [state OLI program](#). A team of U.S. Department of Transportation and APTA safety and education professionals evaluated the applications based on criteria such as key safety messages and target audiences, readiness, evaluation methods, timelines and budget.

"Safety is the number one priority for our industry," said APTA President and CEO Michael Melaniphy. "As public transit grows, we must provide more safety resources to all stakeholders - riders, pedestrians and public transit employees - in ever more creative and effective ways so that the message sinks in. Every public transit system and the community they serve ought to take a look at these model programs as they roll out and begin implementing their own."

Most materials from the projects are currently under development, but transit riders can expect to begin seeing creative safety campaigns

beginning in Fall 2013 and running through 2014.

"Caltrain is gratified to be the recipient of this grant, which will help spread the critical rail safety message in our community," said Michael Scanlon, Caltrain's CEO. "By partnering with Fresh Takes, a digital arts program for youth, to produce a series of short safety videos, Caltrain's safety message will reach an important target audience – our young people."

"DC Streetcar is excited to be working with Operation Lifesaver. As our first line opens later this year, safety is at the forefront of our communications efforts, particularly with the schools along the route," said Carl Jackson, associate director, DDOT. "This grant will help us create a school-age based curriculum to help with our outreach efforts."

"Capital Metro has the highest commitment to safety and is very pleased to receive an Operation Lifesaver Rail Transit Safety Education Grant, which will be used for an innovative, yearlong rail safety education program for middle school students," said the transit system's President & CEO Linda S. Watson. "This grant affirms our continuing relationship with Operation Lifesaver, and will allow us to partner with Creative Action, the largest provider of after school arts programming in Central Texas, on a totally unique rail safety video that the students themselves will create. Studies show that young people are leaders in public transit usage, and this project will encourage our local students to lead the way in transit safety, as well."

Though no date has been set, OLI plans to run another competitive grant round in early 2014. Stay tuned to www.oli.org for details.

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- @trimet @mbtaGM @GoCaltrain @RideRTD @CapMetroATX @dcstreetcar @RideSunRail & SMART awarded grants for transit safety. <http://bit.ly/15buPR1>
- .olinal awards eight transit agencies \$194K to spread safety messages to riders and pedestrians. <http://bit.ly/15buPR1>
- @olinal and @FTA_DOT announce grants to eight transit agencies to blitz safety messages to drivers and pedestrians. <http://bit.ly/15buPR1>

About Operation Lifesaver, Inc.

Operation Lifesaver's mission is to end collisions, deaths and injuries at highway-rail grade crossings and along railroad rights of way. A national network of trained volunteers provides free presentations on rail safety. Learn more at <http://www.oli.org>; follow OLI on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Pinterest](#).