

LEL Case Study: Idaho

Idaho's six Law Enforcement Liaisons (LELs) are full-time law enforcement officers chosen for the role with an emphasis placed on traffic responsibilities and understanding as part of their regular law enforcement duties.

The program was re-established in 2004 with the intention that LELs would serve as a conduit of information between the state highway safety office and the law enforcement community.

The Idaho LEL program is divided into six districts that mirror the state Department of Transportation's districts. The Idaho Office of Highway Safety provides a grant to cover overtime and travel expenses for the LELs for costs directly related to their duties as LEL. Two municipal police officers, two state troopers and two sheriff's deputies comprise the state's LELs, with one of the officers serving as the LEL Coordinator.

One benefit of having active duty law enforcement personnel taking on LEL roles is that as these individuals have been promoted to positions of leadership, traffic safety enforcement, the importance of the LEL, and knowledge of the available state and federal resources have become embedded knowledge within their agencies.

In 2016, following several years of increased fatalities on state roadways, the Office of Highway Safety, recognized that a greater investment into the program could help contribute to the reduction traffic fatalities. Although the program was already well established, LELs undertook a concerted effort to increase law enforcement agency participation in federal mobilizations and assist the SHSO with crash data reporting issues.

The LELs and the SHSO participate in bi-monthly conference calls to discuss issues, share ideas, successes and challenges paired with semi-annual in-person meetings. LELs were encouraged to start being proactive in scheduling visits with law enforcement agencies and to take part in training opportunities with the law enforcement agencies for which they are responsible, as well as participate in community education events and announcements. LELs in the state also are active on social media to further education and public outreach goals.

This increased investment looks to have paid off. Since 2015, the fatality rate has dropped from 1.47 people per 100,000 miles travelled to 1.38 and total traffic-related fatalities in the state have decreased by four percent.

Idaho by the Numbers

Population: 1.75 million
Law Enforcement Agencies: 100-150
Law Enforcement Officers: < 5,000