

Georgia Driver's Education Commission



Annual Report - Fiscal Year 2017

September 26, 2017

Commission Members:

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Spencer Moore, Vice Chairman
Alfred Barber
Kevin Boyd
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In accordance with O.C.G.A. § 15-21-181(b), the Georgia Driver's Education Commission (GDEC) submits this report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House, and the committee chairpersons for the standing committees in the Senate and House of Representatives that are assigned issues related to motor vehicles. This report contains data on the amount of funds collected from the additional penalty imposed on traffic citations for driver's education for the previous three fiscal years, the amount of such funds appropriated to the commission for each corresponding year, and the manner and purposes for which such funds have been expended.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Georgia Driver's Education Commission is to maximize participation in driver's education and training to reduce motor vehicle crashes by making driver's training accessible and affordable to all Georgians.

Board Composition

Pursuant to O.C.G.A § 15-21-173, The Georgia Driver's Education Commission shall consist of eight members who shall serve for terms of four years. The State Board of Education shall appoint one member of the commission and the Department of Driver Services shall appoint two members of the commission. The director of the Governor's Office of Highway Safety shall appoint one member of the commission. The remaining four members of the commission shall be appointed by the Governor, two of whom shall be public school driver's education providers and the other two shall be private driver's education providers. The Governor shall designate a chairperson of the commission from among the members.

Harris Blackwood, Chairman

*Director, Governor's Office of Highway Safety
Appointed by the Governor's Office of Highway Safety*

Spencer R. Moore, Vice Chairman

*Commissioner, Department of Driver Services
Appointed by the Department of Driver Services*

Alfred Barber

*President, Barber's Driving School
Appointed by the Governor representing private driver's education providers*

Kevin Boyd

*State Board of Education, Ninth District Representative
Appointed by the State Board of Education*

Beth Graham

Driving Instructor, Marietta/Cobb Driver's Education

Appointed by the Governor representing public driver's education providers

Lidell Greenway

Vice President of Economic Development, Wiregrass Georgia Technical College

Appointed by the Governor representing public driver's education providers

Eddie Rish

Headmaster, Citizens Christian Academy

Appointed by the Governor representing private driver's education providers

Malika Reed Wilkins

Sr. Principal, Transportation Marketing Manager, Atlanta Regional Commission

Appointed by the Department of Driver Services

Problem Identification

Motor vehicle travel remains the primary means of transportation in the United States and is the leading cause of death for teens. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, (CDC), which has conducted extensive research in the motor vehicle safety, 2,333 teens in the United States ages 16–19 were killed in motor vehicle crashes in 2015. That means that one teen dies every four hours due to motor vehicle crashes in the United States. Further, the CDC reports that teens are at a higher risk of being in a motor vehicle crash than any other age group. The CDC went on to report that “per mile driven, teen drivers ages 16 to 19 are nearly three times more likely than drivers aged 20 and older to be in a fatal crash.”

In 2015, the most recent year with certified data, there were a total of 1,430 fatalities and 19,405 serious injuries as a result of 385,221 motor vehicle crashes in Georgia. The 1,430 fatalities represents a 22.8% increase in comparison to the previous year but remains a reduction of 12.3% from the peak of roadway fatalities which occurred in 2005. Of the 1,430 fatalities in 2015, 180 were under age 21. Of those 180 fatalities under 21, 77 were driving and lost their lives, 89 were passengers, and 14 were non-occupants (pedestrians or bicyclists). The national trend holds in Georgia with motor vehicle crashes being the leading cause of death for Georgians between the ages of 1 and 34

The risk of motor vehicle crashes is higher among 16 to 19 year-olds than among any other age group. In fact, per mile driven, teen drivers ages 16 to 19 are nearly three times more likely than drivers aged 20 and older to be in a fatal crash. In the CDC research mentioned above, the report stated that among teen drivers, those at especially high risk for motor vehicle crashes are males, teens driving with other teen passengers and newly licensed drivers. Additionally, the presence of teen passengers increases the crash risk of unsupervised teen drivers and that risk increases with the number of teen passengers. Also, the risk of crashing is the highest during the first months of licensure. Teens are more likely than older drivers to underestimate dangerous situations or unable to recognize hazardous situations. Fortunately, teen motor vehicle crashes are preventable, and proven strategies can improve the safety of young drivers on the road. The report also identified the eight “danger zones” of teen driving and leading causes teen crashes as

driver inexperience, driving with teen passengers, nighttime driving, not using seat belts, distracted driving, drowsy driving, reckless driving, and impaired driving

Georgia Driver's Education Commission History

On May 10, 2005, as a result of the passage of a law which became known as Joshua's Law (O.C.G.A. § 40-5-22), the Georgia Driver's Education Commission was created. The GDEC was established to recommend to the Governor and the General Assembly changes in state programs, statutes, policies, budgets and standards relating to the provision of driver education and training. Since its inception, the Georgia Driver's Education Commission has worked to identify options for teen drivers to satisfy the driver education requirements mandated under state law. Under Joshua's Law, the Georgia Driver's Education Commission is allowed to collect a surcharge (originally 5%, now 1.5%) of the State's traffic fines for establishing a grant to fund state approved driver education programs. The Governor's Office of Highway Safety was requested to facilitate the allocation and application of the Georgia Driver's Education funds. This grant program was authorized on April 11, 2007. The goal of this program was to generate the highest return on the Georgia Driver's Education Commission investment and thereby improve the performance of beginning licensed drivers while making driver safety training accessible and affordable. During fiscal year 2008, the Georgia Driver's Education Commission awarded 35 grants which consisted of 14 new start-up programs and 21 efforts to enhance or expand established training programs. Seven (7) new and sixteen (16) existing programs were awarded in FY 2009 along with twenty-three (23) carry-forward grantees from the previous year. Beginning with FY 2010 (the third year of funding) only carry-forward grants were permitted because of budget constraints in the State. In FY 2011, the program was suspended until further appropriations were made available. On May 6, 2013, the Governor signed Senate Bill 231, which extended the sunset provision until June 30, 2016. The legislation also reduced the amount of the surcharge collected on traffic citations from 5% to 1.5%. On April 26, 2016, Governor Deal signed HB 806 into law which formally assigned the Georgia Driver's Education Commission to the Governor's Office of Highway Safety and extended the sunset provision from June 30, 2016 until June 30, 2019. In fiscal year 2015, the Commission awarded nine (9) grants totaling \$1,983,900.00. In fiscal year 2016, the Commission awarded 26 grants totaling \$870,080.00 and executed a contract with the Technical College System of Georgia to begin offering driver's education scholarships for \$350.00 per student for the traditional thirty hours of classroom training and six hours of behind the wheel training. The scholarship program continued in FY 2016 with the Technical College System of Georgia.

Fiscal Year 2017 Activities

Georgia Driver's Education Grant Scholarship Program

In fiscal year 2017, the Georgia Driver's Education Commission launched the Georgia Driver's Education Grant Scholarship Program. Under this program, students may apply for a driver's education grant scholarship, and if awarded, complete a driver's education course consisting of thirty (30) hours of classroom instruction and six hours of behind the wheel instruction at an approved driver's education provider. Scholarships are awarded on a tiered priority system. First priority is given to grant scholarship applicants who are a child or dependent of a public safety professional or member of the United States military killed in the line of duty. If the applicant is a child or dependent of a public safety professional killed in the line of duty, the applicant must

identify said professional and provide a copy of the student applicant's birth certificate or other government issued documentation proving the student was a dependent of the identified public safety professional. For purposes of this grant scholarship program, the Georgia Driver's Education Commission will rely on the Georgia Public Safety Memorial Committee to identify and define public safety professionals killed in the line of duty. If the applicant is a child or dependent of United States military personnel killed in the line of duty, the applicant must provide DD Form 1300 (Report of Casualty) as documentation.

Second priority is given to scholarship applicants who can demonstrate a need based on family income. The chart below is used to determine financial need eligibility; these figures are 125% of the eligibility guidelines that are used to determine eligibility for free and reduced priced meals for students in the State of Georgia. Grant scholarship allocations in this priority level are evenly distributed among Georgia's United States congressional districts.

| Household Size* | Maximum Income Level (Per Year) |
|--|---------------------------------|
| 1 | \$27,472.50 |
| 2 | \$37,046.25 |
| 3 | \$46,620.00 |
| 4 | \$56,193.75 |
| 5 | \$65,767.50 |
| 6 | \$75,341.25 |
| 7 | \$84,937.50 |
| 8 | \$94,557.50 |
| 9 | \$104,177.50 |
| 10 | \$113,797.50 |
| 11 | \$123,417.50 |
| 12 | \$133,037.50 |
| 13 | \$142,657.50 |
| 14 | \$152,277.50 |
| 15 | \$161,897.50 |
| *For Households with more than fifteen people, add \$9,620.63 per additional person. | |

Third priority is given to all applicants who do not meet the criteria set forth in the first priority and second priority outlined above. Grant scholarship allocations in this priority level are evenly distributed among Georgia's United States congressional districts.

All of the applicants in the first priority are awarded before the second priority applicants; and all of the second priority applicants are awarded before third priority applicants are awarded a grant scholarship. If more grant scholarship applications are submitted than grant scholarships available in each priority level, grant scholarships are awarded using a computer generated random selection method from the priority level applications. The grant scholarship is awarded in the form of a voucher to the student. The student may then take said voucher to an eligible

provider. The provider will then submit the voucher to the Commission for reimbursement as set forth herein after the course has been completed.

Public and private high schools that are licensed by the Georgia Department of Driver Services, private driving schools (commercial for profit, and not for profit) that are licensed by the Georgia Department of Drivers Services and that have been licensed for a minimum of two years, and technical colleges, colleges, universities and state agencies that are authorized to provide driver's education by their governing bodies and that meet the minimum standards for drivers training and driver's education set forth by said governing body are eligible to apply to become an authorized provider in the program. The Commission will reimburse providers their publicly advertised price for the standard "30 & 6" (thirty hours of classroom instruction and six hours of behind the wheel instruction) up to \$500.00 after the student completes the course.

In fiscal year 2017, the Commission awarded 5,486 driver's education scholarships through the Georgia Driver's Education Grant Scholarship program. Of those, 475 student forfeited scholarships or chose not complete driver's education through an authorized provider in the program. The remaining 5,011 students who completed driver's education represents a value of \$1,958,030.20 paid in driver's education grant scholarships. Below is a listing of the driver's education providers participating in the program, with the fees charged to the Commission, and the number of students each provider has trained.

| Driver's Education Provider | Count | Rate | Value of Scholarships |
|--|--------------|-------------|------------------------------|
| A-1 Driving School, Inc. | 650 | \$ 399.00 | \$259,350.00 |
| Barber's Driving School, Inc. | 395 | \$ 449.00 | \$177,355.00 |
| Wiregrass Georgia Technical College | 309 | \$ 350.00 | \$108,150.00 |
| Lanier Technical College | 248 | \$ 350.00 | \$ 86,800.00 |
| Georgia Northwestern Technical College | 218 | \$ 350.00 | \$ 76,300.00 |
| Central Georgia Technical College | 196 | \$ 350.00 | \$ 68,600.00 |
| West Georgia Technical College | 175 | \$ 350.00 | \$ 61,250.00 |
| South Cherokee/Jasper Driver Improvement Clinic Inc. | 165 | \$ 450.00 | \$ 74,250.00 |
| Marietta City Board of Education | 147 | \$ 385.00 | \$ 56,595.00 |
| Southern Regional Technical College | 141 | \$ 350.00 | \$ 49,350.00 |
| Southern Crescent Technical College | 125 | \$ 350.00 | \$ 43,750.00 |
| A+ Driving Services, Inc. | 122 | \$ 495.00 | \$ 60,390.00 |
| Augusta Technical College | 119 | \$ 350.00 | \$ 41,650.00 |
| Dickerson Driving School, Inc. | 113 | \$ 495.00 | \$ 55,935.00 |
| Georgia Piedmont Technical College | 113 | \$ 350.00 | \$ 39,550.00 |
| Ogeechee Technical College | 110 | \$ 350.00 | \$ 38,500.00 |
| Jones Driver Education School of Augusta, Inc. | 107 | \$ 420.00 | \$ 44,940.00 |
| North Georgia Technical College | 94 | \$ 350.00 | \$ 32,900.00 |
| Albany Technical College | 93 | \$ 350.00 | \$ 32,550.00 |
| Taggart's Driving School | 93 | \$ 495.00 | \$ 46,035.00 |
| Oconee Fall Line Technical College | 87 | \$ 350.00 | \$ 30,450.00 |

| | | | |
|---|----|-----------|--------------|
| Coastal Pines Technical College | 84 | \$ 350.00 | \$ 29,400.00 |
| Columbus Technical College | 81 | \$ 350.00 | \$ 28,350.00 |
| Georgia Driving School, Inc. | 80 | \$ 425.00 | \$ 34,000.00 |
| FB Driving, Inc. | 70 | \$ 350.00 | \$ 24,500.00 |
| Savannah Technical College | 69 | \$ 350.00 | \$ 24,150.00 |
| AA Academy of Action Driving School | 67 | \$ 450.00 | \$ 30,150.00 |
| Southeastern Regional Driving and Safety Academy Inc | 62 | \$ 395.00 | \$ 24,490.00 |
| West Metro Driving School | 59 | \$ 450.00 | \$ 26,550.00 |
| Southeastern Technical College | 59 | \$ 350.00 | \$ 20,650.00 |
| Safety 1st Driver Education | 57 | \$ 399.00 | \$ 22,743.00 |
| South Georgia Technical College | 50 | \$ 350.00 | \$ 17,500.00 |
| Duluth DUI and Driving School | 49 | \$ 465.00 | \$ 22,785.00 |
| Atlanta Technical College | 47 | \$ 350.00 | \$ 16,450.00 |
| Advance Driving Academy | 46 | \$ 380.00 | \$ 17,480.00 |
| Thumbs Up Driving Inc. | 44 | \$ 450.00 | \$ 19,800.00 |
| Calhoun City BOE | 36 | \$ 290.00 | \$ 10,440.00 |
| Just Driver Training | 33 | \$ 500.00 | \$ 16,500.00 |
| Kennesaw Driving School | 29 | \$ 495.00 | \$ 14,355.00 |
| Executive Results DUI & Defensive Driving School, LLC | 23 | \$ 425.00 | \$ 9,775.00 |
| Safe America Foundation, Inc. | 23 | \$ 474.00 | \$ 10,902.00 |
| Athens Technical College | 21 | \$ 350.00 | \$ 7,350.00 |
| Nathan's Driving School, Inc. | 20 | \$ 498.13 | \$ 9,962.60 |
| Gwinnett County Board Of Education | 18 | \$ 345.00 | \$ 6,210.00 |
| !!@LFA Driving School of Atlanta !!, LLC | 14 | \$ 495.00 | \$ 6,930.00 |
| Rockdale-Newton Driving School | 14 | \$ 495.00 | \$ 6,930.00 |
| Preston Driving School | 13 | \$ 500.00 | \$ 6,500.00 |
| Oconee County Board of Education | 10 | \$ 399.96 | \$ 3,999.60 |
| White County Ninth Grade Academy | 5 | \$ 250.00 | \$ 1,250.00 |
| 1st United Driving & DUI School | 2 | \$ 399.00 | \$ 798.00 |
| First Class Defensive Driving | 2 | \$ 350.00 | \$ 700.00 |
| Southern Defensive Driving School | 2 | \$ 395.00 | \$ 790.00 |
| New London School of Driving Inc. | 2 | \$ 495.00 | \$ 990.00 |

Foster Children Pilot Program

Joshua's Law requires that 16 and 17 year olds with a driver's instructional permit to complete forty hours of supervised driving with an adult before qualifying for a Class D license. The Commission conducted a pilot program with the Department of Family and Children Services to assist students in foster care who had completed a driver's education course in completing the forty hours of supervised driving with a driving school.

Youth Offender Program

In support of the Governor's criminal justice program, the Commission provides funding to train youth in custody of the Department of Juvenile Justice in completing driver's education and

completing the required forty hours of supervised driving. When the students are released from the Department of Juvenile Justice’s custody, they will have obtained a driver’s license and begin reentry with baseline workforce credential.

Funding History

| Year | Amount of Funds Collected | Amount of Funds Appropriated to the Commission |
|---|---------------------------|--|
| 2012 | \$10,655,668.04 | \$0.00 |
| 2013 | \$10,061,393.72 | \$0.00 |
| 2014* | \$5,665,150.75 | \$0.00 |
| 2015 | \$3,746,817.95 | \$5,665,150.00 |
| 2016 | \$3,313,536.34 | \$3,746,221.00 |
| 2017 | \$3,095,265.73 | \$3,313,516.00 |
| *Fine reduced from 5% to 1.5% effective May 6, 2013. The fine percentage is determined by the date of offense, not the date of adjudication. Therefore, some fines paid in FY 2014 through FY 2017 may have resulted from citations prior to the change in statute and were assessed at 5%. | | |