

# ADDRESSING INEQUITIES IN DRIVER EDUCATION AND CRASH RISK AMONG YOUNG DRIVERS

Mark McKechnie, Director of External Relations, WTSC

Washington State Transportation Commission

December 13, 2022

# IMPACT OF GRADUATED DRIVER LICENSE (GDL) POLICIES

NHTSA (2006) evaluated the effects of Graduated Driver License (GDL) programs and found that ***states with at least five of these seven elements saw 16%-21% reductions in fatal crashes for 16-year-old drivers***, compared to states without GDL requirements:

1. Minimum age for learner permit (15 ½ in WA)
2. Mandatory waiting period (6 mo. In WA)
3. Minimum hours of supervised driving (50 hours in WA)
4. Minimum age for intermediate license (16 years In WA)
5. Minimum age for full license (18 years In WA)
6. Nighttime restriction (1:00-5:00 am for first 12 months in WA)
7. Passenger restrictions (no non-relative passengers under 20 years old for first 12 months in WA)

# WA INTERMEDIATE LICENSE REQUIREMENTS

- At least 16 years of age
- Instruction permit for not less than 6 months
- *Passed a driver education course* (meeting standards under RCW 46.20.100)
- Certification by parent, guardian, or employer that applicant has had 50 hours of driving experience, including:
  - 10 hours at night
  - Supervision by a licensed driver age 21+ with 3+ years driving experience
  - No citations for driving infractions
  - No adjudications related to alcohol or drugs

# INTERMEDIATE LICENSE RESTRICTIONS

- During first 6 mos. of intermediate license or until age 18 (whichever is first), licensee may not have non-relative passengers younger than 20 years old
- May not drive between 1:00-5:00 am, unless accompanied by parent, guardian or licensed driver 25+ years of age
- May not operate a mobile device while driving, except in emergency
- After 12 months, passenger and hour restrictions are lifted if there is no history of citations or crashes

*This is not a complete/detailed summary. For complete details, see [RCW 46.20.075](#)*

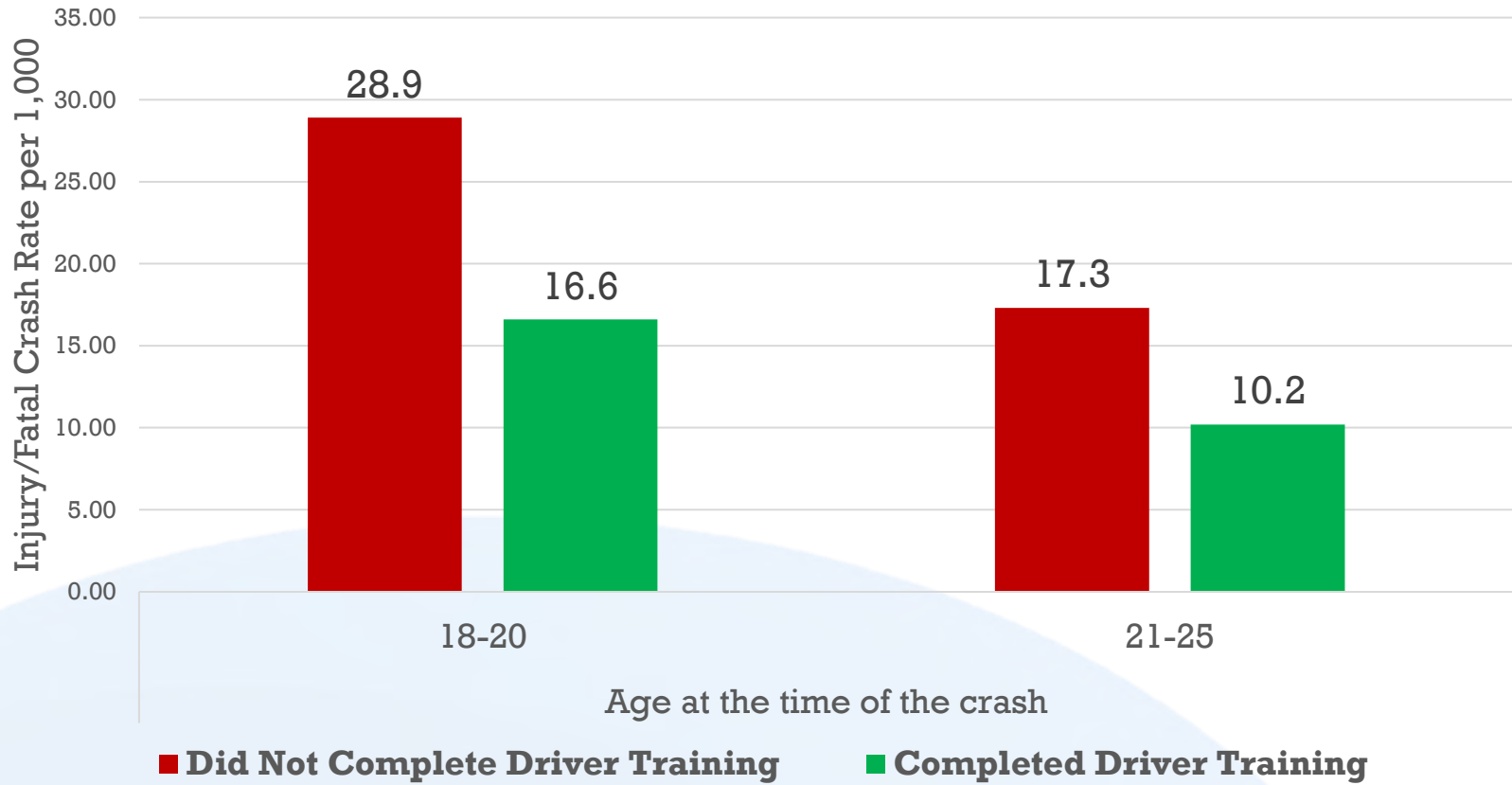
# WASHINGTON REQUIRES TRAINING PLUS EXPERIENCE

- In addition to other GDL requirements and restrictions, Washington requires a driver training course before a 16- or 17-year-old can obtain an intermediate license.
- Courses include:
  - 30 hours of classroom instruction
  - A minimum of 6 hours of practice driving
  - A minimum of one-hour behind-the-wheel observation
- Most courses are provided by private driving schools at a cost of \$400-\$750
- Very few high schools offer driver education anymore

# TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE PREVENT SERIOUS CRASHES

**Crash involvement rates for 18-25 year olds involved in injury and fatal crashes between 2016 and 2020 in Washington by driver training completion status**

*Crash rates are young drivers involved in injury and fatal crashes per 1,000 licensed drivers*



# HERE'S THE PROBLEM

When the Department of Licensing looked at 629,929 drivers who were 16-25 and received their first license in WA during 2016-2020:

- Only 281,996 (44.8%) of them had received driver training
- The majority had not (374,933, 55.2%)

Multiple surveys of young drivers, including one conducted by WTSC in 2020, found that the cost of driver training was listed as a primary reason why they waited or intended to wait until 18 or older to obtain a driver's license (when the training requirement no longer applied). 53% said they waited or intended to wait because of the cost of driver education courses.



**Young driver crash involvement rates for injury and fatal crashes for 2016-2020**

*Driver crash involvements per 1,000 licensed drivers*

**Age of licensed drivers**

2016-2020		Age of licensed drivers										
Average	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25		
16	23.5	21.3	18.2	15.6	13.7	14.2	13.0	12.5	11.8	9.5		
17	-	28.2	25.3	20.4	19.3	17.5	16.8	16.2	15.9	15.1		
18	-	-	36.2	27.9	22.7	20.7	19.8	20.2	17.6	17.6		
19	-	-	-	32.2	25.0	20.7	19.4	18.8	18.8	17.3		
20	-	-	-	-	29.5	26.4	20.7	17.7	18.5	16.1		
21	-	-	-	-	-	27.7	23.8	18.5	15.3	13.7		
22	-	-	-	-	-	-	25.6	20.3	15.0	13.3		
23	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20.6	19.8	13.5		
24	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20.7	16.9		
25	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	21.6		

**EDUCATION AND TRAINING THROUGH WA GDL  
HAVE A LASTING IMPACT ON DRIVER SAFETY**



# INEQUITY

- Lower-income students are more likely to wait to become licensed at 18 or older due to cost
- This disproportionately impacts communities of color
- Because lower-income and BIPOC individuals are more likely to be in the group of drivers who have not had driver safety training...
  - They are consequently at significantly higher risk of involvement in injury or fatal crashes, compared to their peers who have received driver training

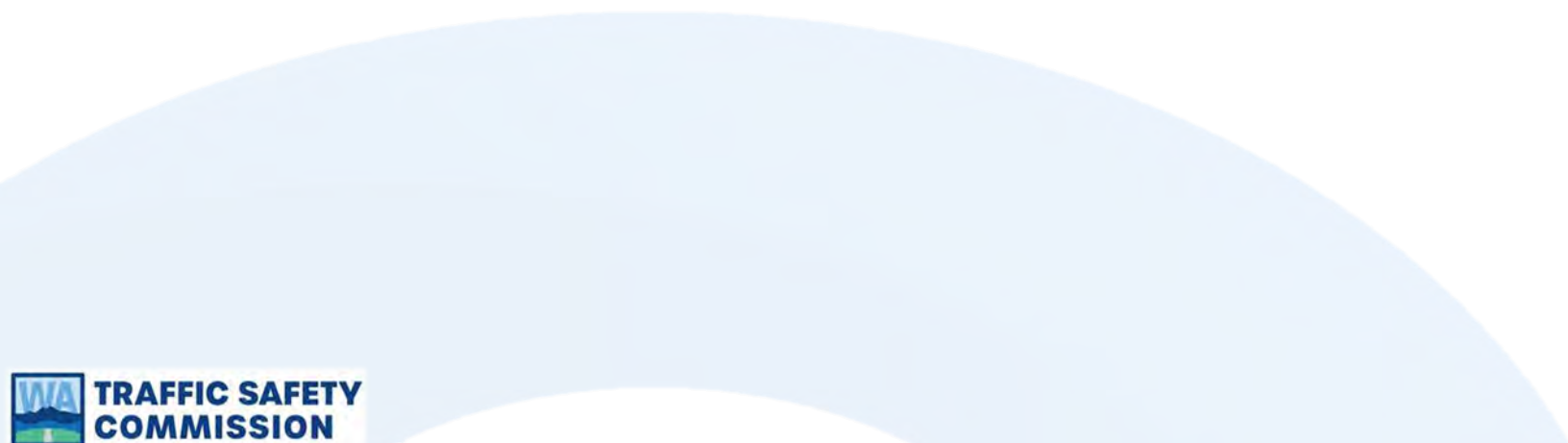
# LEGISLATIVE CONCEPT

(PENDING REVIEW BY THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE)

- Create a low-income novice driver safety account
- DOL would administer the account to fund scholarship vouchers for low-income students
- Vouchers would cover the average cost of an accredited driver training course
- A one-time surcharge of \$5.00 on new driver licenses would fund the account (grants/donations could supplement)
- This could fund approximately 2,000 scholarships per year



# Questions



# Thank You

For more information:

[mmckechnie@wtsc.wa.gov](mailto:mmckechnie@wtsc.wa.gov)

