

Spring Project 2026

Project GPS: Get Places Safely

COMPETITION

PROJECT TOOLKIT



A student-led roadmap for speaking up, leading change, and promoting safe choices through Project GPS.



PROJECT GPS

COMPETITION CHECKLIST



Competition To-Do List

1. Register for Project GPS materials
2. Review Competition Toolkit
3. Complete pre-project data collection
4. Plan out the Creative Event/activities
5. Promote event/activities
6. Implement Creative Event/activities
7. Complete post-project data collection
8. Submit project Final Report

Competition Tips

- Complete activities throughout the entire project period to keep traffic safety messaging visible.
- Document your efforts through the project period; don't wait until the end!
- Students should lead the project whenever possible.



Registration Opens:
Monday, February 23

Project Period:
March 9- May 22



Final Report Deadline:
Friday, May 29

Winner Announcement:
Friday, June 12



Visit Project GPS's page on our website for all registration links, deadlines, and project information!



yovaso.org/project-gps



PHOTOS NEEDED

Because Project GPS is brand new this year, please share pictures of activities, project resources in action, and student participation that celebrate your efforts in helping teens Get Places Safely!

**Photos may be featured in YOVASO promotions, social media, or future Project GPS materials.*

**Need help bringing
Project GPS ideas to life?
Have questions about
the new project?**



**Reach out for help with planning,
event ideas, materials, or to
invite us to attend your event or
club meetings!**

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

Project GPS: Get Places Safely is a free educational initiative designed to help protect youth and teens as they approach the “100 Deadliest Days” for young drivers—the period between Memorial Day and Labor Day when crash rates increase significantly. The project aims to reduce crashes, injuries, and fatalities among young drivers, passengers, pedestrians, and cyclists by encouraging seat belt use, responsible decision-making, and empowering youth to speak up if they feel unsafe, especially during the high-risk spring and summer months.



MIDDLE SCHOOL FOCUS

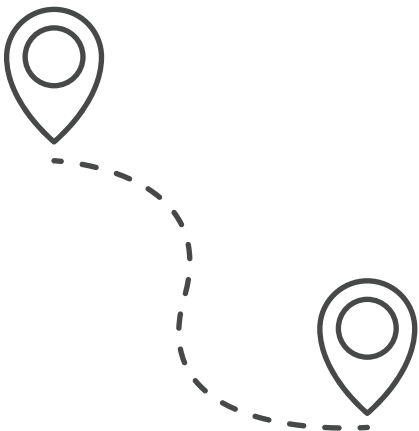
At the middle school level, Project GPS focuses on building a strong foundation of traffic safety awareness.

Students learn the importance of positive passenger behaviors, seat belt use, and their rights as passengers, while also exploring pedestrian and bicycle safety to support smart, everyday travel choices.



HIGH SCHOOL FOCUS

At the high school level, Project GPS shifts toward prevention of high-risk driving behaviors, with an emphasis on reducing teen speeding and increase seat belt use. The project will also address distraction-free driving, and other common warm-weather risks such as driving with too many passengers, drowsy driving, curfew violations, and alcohol or drug use.



PROJECT GPS SEEKS TO EMPOWER YOUTH TO DEVELOP POSITIVE ATTITUDES AND SAFE BEHAVIORS AS BOTH DRIVERS AND PASSENGERS; ENSURING THEY HAVE THE TOOLS TO GET PLACES SAFELY.

COMPETITION COMPONENTS Q&A



Q: HOW ARE WINNERS SELECTED?

A: Schools and youth groups must submit a final report in order to be eligible for competition judging. Schools will receive points for each component of the competition; completion of the pre- and post- data collection, planning and implementing a creative event and for each additional activity you do during the project period.



Q: WHO CAN WIN AND WHAT PRIZES ARE AWARDED?

A: All winners will receive both a monetary award and a prize banner.

At the **high school level**, the statewide winner will receive \$500 while five additional finalists will receive \$100.

At the **middle school level**, the statewide winner will receive \$300 while three additional finalists will receive \$100.

COMPETITION COMPONENTS

✓ GATHER DATA



✓ PLAN YOUR EVENT



✓ SPEAK UP & SHARE



GATHER DATA



The Gather Data component helps schools understand current traffic safety behaviors among students. Schools collect information through seat belt checks or student surveys at the beginning and end of the project to measure impact and behavior change.

- **Choose one data collection method** (seat belt checks or student surveys).
- Data should be based on at least 100 cars checked OR 100 surveys collected.
- Pre-project data must be collected before announcing the project or beginning any promotions, events, or activities.
- Schools must share the results with the student body and will be asked to explain how the information was shared in the final report (announcement, social media, etc.)
- The same data collection method used for pre-project data must also be used for post-project data collection.

SEAT BELT CHECKS

OR

STUDENT SURVEYS

Schools and Youth Groups will conduct two unannounced seat belt checks- one before project promotions begin and one at the end of the project.

A team of students and at least one adult must observe vehicles as they enter or leave the school and record whether everyone in the vehicle is buckled up.

Schools and youth groups must collect two surveys- one before project promotions begin and one at the end of the project.

This survey collects data on students' seat belt use, passenger safety behaviors, and students' confidence speaking up when they feel unsafe in a vehicle.



GOAL: TO SEE AN INCREASE IN SEAT BELT USAGE



GATHER DATA

SEAT BELT CHECKS - STEPS & TIPS

SEAT BELT CHECK REMINDERS:

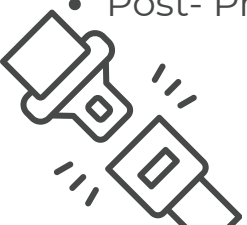
- Two checks are required to be eligible for prizes.
 - Pre-Check: Prior to kicking off the project
 - Post-Check: Final week of the project
- Checks must be unannounced. Do not share the date, time, or location with the student body. The goal is to measure typical seat belt use, not behavior changed by influence from prior notification.
- Make sure to get administration approval prior to each check.
- No signage or publicity may be displayed near the check location.
- Safety first! We suggest surveyors wear reflective vests and stand in safe, designated areas.

VEHICLE COUNT REQUIREMENTS:

- Check at least 100 consecutive vehicles per check (unless exempt due to school size).
- Use the same location, time, and approximate number of vehicles for both checks for accurate data comparison.
- Small schools with fewer than 100 vehicles should note this on the form and will not be penalized.
- How to count vehicles:
 - **Count vehicles, not individual occupants.**
 - A vehicle is marked “Yes” only if everyone is buckled.
 - Anyone buckling up as they approach the check or after stopping does not count as buckled.

REPORTING RESULTS:

- Plan to communicate the results with your student body.
- Find the Pre- Project Data Collection submission link at: yovaso.org/project-gps
- Post- Project Data Collection will be submitted in your Final Report.





GATHER DATA

SEAT BELT CHECK FORM

Name of School: _____ Circle One: PRE or POST
Seat Belt Check Date: _____ Seat Belt Check Time: _____
Seat Belt Check Location: _____ # of vehicles checked: _____

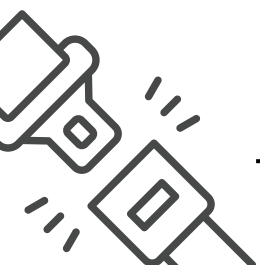
Directions:

- For each box, circle Y or N.
- Circle Y if **ALL occupants** (drivers and passengers) are buckled up in the car.
- Circle N, **if one or more occupants** in the car are not wearing a seatbelt.

Vehicle	Vehicle	Vehicle	Vehicle	Vehicle	Vehicle	Vehicle	Vehicle	Vehicle	Vehicle
Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N
Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N
Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N
Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N
Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N
Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N
Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N
Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N
Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N

Total Vehicles with all Passengers Belted _____ ÷ Total Vehicles surveyed _____ = _____ % buckled up

Don't forget to submit data. YOVASO reserves the right to request this form, if needed. Please keep all copies for your records.



Adult Signature verifying results

Date



GATHER DATA

STUDENT SURVEY STEPS & TIPS

DATA COLLECTION:

- The survey has been updated in order to collect more accurate data and has a total of 7 questions.
- Data will be based on question #1.
 - A student answering, “yes” will be counted the same as one vehicle with all passengers belted in the seat belt check.
 - A student answering “no” or “sometimes” will be viewed the same as one or more occupants unbuckled in a car during a seat belt check.
- Schools can use the data from the other six questions to lead class discussions, support Speak Up & Share Activities, and to identify the challenges that keep students from buckling up.
- To ensure accurate data comparison, schools should use the same group of students for both the pre and post-surveys. (Ex: driver’s ed classes or specific grade levels)
 - Surveying the same group of students allows a more accurate measure of behavior change over time.

REPORTING RESULTS:

- Plan to communicate the results with your student body.
- Total number of surveys with “yes” divided by total number of surveys collected equals your percentage that will be recorded on the final report.
- Find the Pre- Project Data Collection submission link at: yovaso.org/project-gps
- Post- Project Data Collection will be submitted in your Final Report.

DISCUSSION OPPORTUNITY

After administering the survey in a classroom or group setting, take time to discuss the responses with students. Encourage them to share their thoughts on the importance of seat belts, why teens may not buckle up 100% of the time, and brainstorm realistic ways they can influence peers to make safer choices.





GATHER DATA

STUDENT SURVEY



1. **How often do you wear a seatbelt when are in a vehicle?**

- a. Always
- b. Sometimes
- c. Never

2. **When you don't wear a seat belt, what is your main reason?** *(Select all that apply)*

- a. I forget
- b. I'm only riding a short distance
- c. It's uncomfortable
- d. No one else is wearing one
- e. I don't think it's necessary
- f. I always wear my seatbelt

3. **What most influences you to wear a seatbelt?** *(Select all that apply)*

- a. Personal safety
- b. Parents or family expectations
- c. Following the law
- d. Friends' expectations
- e. Seeing or hearing about crashes
- f. Other: _____

4. **As a passenger or driver, do you check that everyone is buckled before the vehicle moves?**

- a. Always
- b. Sometimes
- c. Never

5. **Have you ever felt unsafe in a vehicle because of a driver's behavior (texting, speeding, etc.)**

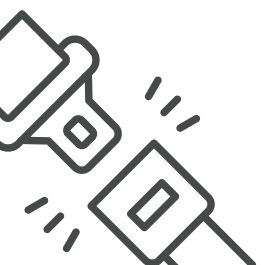
- a. Yes
- b. No

6. **If you felt unsafe, did you speak up?**

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. I haven't been in this situation

7. **What makes it hard to speak up for safety?** *(Select all that apply)*

- a. I am worried how others will react
- b. I don't feel confident speaking up
- c. I don't think it would help
- d. I usually do speak up
- e. Other: _____



TO LEARN MORE, VISIT YOVASO.ORG OR FIND YOVASO ON SOCIAL MEDIA

PLAN YOUR EVENT

The Plan Your Event component challenges students to design and implement a creative, schoolwide/community event that promotes traffic safety. Events should be seen, heard, or experienced by a majority of students and/or the community.



STEP 1: CHOOSE YOUR FOCUS

Decide what safety topic the event will highlight:

- Seat belt use, speed prevention, distraction-free driving, passenger rights, etc.

Determine the goal of your event:

- What should students do differently after the event?

STEP 2: PICK YOUR FORMAT

Choose a format that reaches majority of the student body or community:

- Schoolwide PSA
- Contest (door decorating, slogan, photo, PSA, etc.)
- Interactive display where student create posters, sign pledges, create safe driving promises, etc.
- Competition (cornhole or dodgeball tournament, relay race during a pep rally, Students vs. Staff basketball game)
- Spirit week with traffic safety themed days
- Traffic Safety Display outside of school or at a business
- YOVASO Day/Week with activities throughout the day
- Live demonstration like a mock crash or guest speaker
- In conjunction with schoolwide activities such as school dances or promotion ceremonies/graduation



PLAN YOUR EVENT

STEP 3: MAKE IT STUDENT-LED

Keep in mind the peer-to-peer aspect of the YOVASO program.

The Creative Event should include:

- Students collaborating together to plan the event
- Students creating promotional materials, along with event items
- Students taking the lead on running the event
- Adult sponsors and SROs guiding and supporting student leaders

STEP 4: PLAN THE DETAILS

Planning Considerations:

- Administration approval if applicable
- Location and data set
- A schedule of events prior to event and during the event
- All materials gathered, created, loaned, or bought
- Student and Sponsor/SRO roles assigned
- Event Promotion plan- social media, flyers, making announcements, etc.
- A plan to document the event by taking pictures/videos

STEP 5: DOCUMENT & REFLECT

After the Create Event:

- Estimate how many people participated in your event
- Share pictures with your school and with YOVASO staff
- Make sure to thank any organizations, groups or specific people who helped make the event a success

**You will write up your creative event in the Final Report*



PLAN YOUR EVENT

CREATIVE EVENT INSPIRATION

The following examples are real events host by schools during previous projects

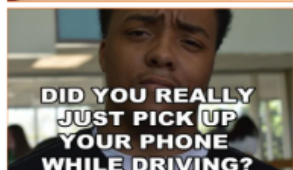


Project GPS Themed Week

Host a Project GPS Spirit Week filled with daily announcements, lunch activities, prize drawings, and themed dress-up days that promote traffic safety.

Why This Works: When students see and hear the message all week long, it sticks. Repetition + fun activities = stronger impact.

Planning Tip: Assign each day a clear theme ("Buckle Up Monday," "Text-Free Tuesday") and create a flyer explaining each day's theme and activities students can look forward to!



Meme Wall or Wall of Fame

Create an interactive Meme Wall by taking funny student photos and turning them into traffic safety-themed memes or host a "Wall of Fame" featuring seat belt selfies and safety pledges. Offer small prize drawings to boost participation and display submissions in a high-traffic area.

Why This Works: Students love seeing themselves and their friends featured. When safety messaging feels fun and social, more people pay attention.

Planning Tip: Check with local businesses about donating coupons to give out as participation prizes or to assist with the cost of printing the photos.



Crashed Vehicle Display or "Smash Car" Fundraiser

Display a crashed vehicle on campus as a visual reminder of the consequences of unsafe driving. Students can add facts, statistics, or safety pledges around the display to connect the visual impact to prevention messaging. You could also include a fundraising aspect by selling tickets to students to hit the wreck car.

Why This Works: Seeing something real makes the message feel serious and memorable. A fundraiser also benefits your YOVASO club!

Planning Tip: Work with administrators early to secure approval and placement. Include the name of the tow company that donated the wrecked car in the display.



Safe Driving Pep Rally

Organize a schoolwide pep rally focused on traffic safety awareness. Include interactive games, grade-level competitions, trivia, victim advocate speakers, and prize giveaways. Build excitement throughout the week and announce winners during the rally.

Why This Works: Big, high-energy events create shared memories. When safety messaging feels exciting instead of boring, students are more likely to remember it.

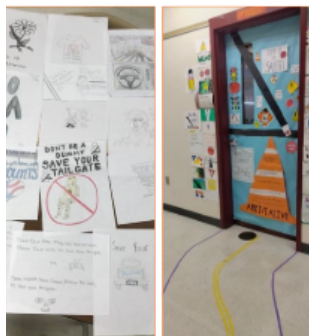
Planning Tip: Plan interactive elements not just speeches. Games, competitions, and audience participation will keep energy high and attention focused.



PLAN YOUR EVENT

CREATIVE EVENT INSPIRATION

The following examples are real events host by schools during previous projects



Schoolwide Creative Contests

Host a contest such as a t-shirt design, sticker/poster design competition, door decorating challenge, or PSA/video contest centered on youth traffic safety. Display or share winning entries schoolwide to keep the message visible beyond the contest itself. Prizes can be awarded to the winning entries to encourage participation in contest.

Why This Works: Students are more likely to listen when the message comes from their peers. Creativity + competition keeps engagement high.

Planning Tip: Set clear contest rules and judging criteria ahead of time to keep the process fair. Partner with a local business to create winning design for a t-shirt or share winning entry on school social media.



Student Competitions

Host a schoolwide tournament such as cornhole, dodgeball, volleyball, or another student-favorite activity. To participate or attend, students complete a traffic safety pledge or promise to buckle up, slow down, or drive distraction-free. Promote the event in advance and recognize winners publicly to increase excitement and turnout.



Why This Works: Students show up for fun and competition and while they're there, they engage with the safety message. Pairing something they enjoy with a positive commitment makes the message lastly.

Planning Tip: Make sure the safety message is visible throughout the event with banners, announcements, and student shoutouts during the tournament.



Project GPS Field Day

Organize a Project GPS Field Day with interactive stations that combine fun and learning. Include activities such as seat belt relays, DUI goggle obstacle courses (with supervision), trivia challenges, reaction-time games, or distraction simulations. Rotate groups of students through stations so everyone participates.

Why This Works: Hands-on experiences are more engaging than lectures. When students actively participate, they remember what they learned, especially when it's tied to teamwork and friendly competition.

Planning Tip: Assign student leaders to each station and create a rotation schedule ahead of time. Keep instructions clear and prioritize safety at every activity.



Safety Scavenger Hunt

Organize a schoolwide scavenger hunt where students search for hidden Project GPS logos, objects, or clues placed throughout the building. Each item can include a traffic safety trivia question, fact, or safe driving pledge that students must complete to earn points or prizes. Promote the hunt daily through announcements and share quick safety statistics.

Why This Works: It turns safety messaging into a game. When students actively look for clues and answer questions, they engage with the information instead of just hearing it once and forgetting it.

Planning Tip: Place clues in high-traffic areas, set clear rules for participation, and use daily announcements or social media to release hints!

SPEAK UP & SHARE



The Speak Up & Share component of Project GPS encourages students to continue promoting traffic safety throughout the project period. These activities are separate from your Creative Event and are designed to keep the message visible, relevant, and peer-driven.

Consistent messaging increases awareness and reinforces behavior change. The Speak Up & Share call-to-action activities ensures that traffic safety is not a one-day event, but an ongoing conversation that **builds positive peer influence** throughout the project period.

Schools should document each Speak Up & Share activity completed during the project period, along with photos. The Final Report will ask for a numerical list of all activities.



Whenever possible, these activities should be student-led or student-supported. **Peer-to-peer messaging is one of the most effective ways to influence positive behavior change.**



The activities are grouped by time and planning level and are intended as inspiration, not requirements! Be creative, reach your audience, and use Project GPS materials to amplify your message.



SPEAK UP & SHARE

SIMPLE, LOW PREP ACTIVITIES

- Share a daily or weekly traffic safety fact during announcements
- Place Project GPS tip cards on windshields of cars in the student parking lot
- Post a “Safety Tip of the Week” on school social media or printed in the school newsletter
- Add a traffic safety slide to morning announcements or digital boards
- Chalk positive safety messages on sidewalks (with permission)
- Include a traffic safety blurb in schoolwide emails/texts
- Ask a traffic safety discussion question in homeroom
- Hang up Project posters in the hallway and other high traffic areas
- Create your own posters with traffic safety information
- Feature a “Safety Shout-Out” recognizing safe behaviors
- Share a quick seat belt statistic during athletic announcements
- Display a running seat belt percentage update from seat belt checks/student surveys
- Invite teachers to include a one-minute safety reminder in class
- Pass out candy w/safety messages, distributed- Dum-Dums/Smarties, etc.
- Add your own safety messaging or school name to the Project GPS banner and hang it up



PROJECT GPS TIE-IN:

Get creative with announcements and tie-in the project’s theme in the messaging!

- **GPS Safety Tip of the Week**
 - Share a “Route Reminder” during Friday announcements (ex: “Today’s Route Reminder: Buckle up every trip, no matter where you are seated.”) as a weekend safety reminder.
- **Recalculate Moment**
 - Share a weekly “If you make a risky choice... Recalculate.” message tying mistakes to safer next choices.
- **Morning ‘Navigation Note’**
 - One-sentence safety reminders framed as GPS prompts or using a GPS voice.

START THE CONVERSATION





SPEAK UP & SHARE

MODERATE PLANNING ACTIVITIES

- Host a pop-up pledge signing during lunch using the Project GPS banner
- Run a weekly trivia challenge over the announcements or at lunch with small prizes
- Create a “Who Do You Buckle Up For?” photo wall
- Post student testimonial quotes around school explaining the importance of traffic safety
- Decorate classroom or office doors with safety messaging
- Place QR codes around school linking to a school pledge form
- Organize a safety-themed spirit day
- Create and distribute student-designed traffic safety tip cards
- Design a seatbelt for your school mascot to wear at sporting events
- Share short peer-recorded videos on social media
- Host a sticker design mini contest
- Ask teams/clubs to take group seat belt pledge photos
- Set up a traveling traffic safety display that moves locations weekly
- Give thank you cards to bus drivers for keeping student passengers safe
- Incorporate safety messaging into graduation, prom or senior events



PROJECT GPS TIE-IN:

Make bulletin boards interactive by sharing important traffic safety information, involve the entire student body and drawing attention!

- **Weekly Navigation Challenge**
 - Each week post a new challenge on a bulletin board (ex. Remind one friend to buckle up this week) and have students sign each challenge they complete
- **Get Places Safely Postcards**
 - Have students share how they plan to get to their destination safely using the Project GPS Postcards
- **Destination Summer Countdown**
 - Include a countdown to summer and have students make pledges to practice safe behaviors as a driver, passenger, pedestrian and cyclist.

KEEP THE
MESSAGE VISIBLE





SPEAK UP & SHARE

ADVANCED PLANNING ACTIVITIES

- Any of the events from the Creative Events section (schoolwide contest, team competition, spirit weeks, traffic safety informational table, etc.)
- Coordinate a Distracted Driving Simulator visit or a YOVASO Safety Day
- Host a YOVASO booth at a local community event
- Organize a grade-level participation competition
- Partner with athletics teams to promote buckling up at games with halftime traffic safety activities
- Invite EMS, law enforcement or victim advocates to speak in a schoolwide assembly
- Organize a parent-student safety night, inviting community partners
- Collaborate with Driver's Ed classes or an elementary school for peer presentations
- Present project results to school administration or school board
- Pair up with a middle school YOVASO club, share about the high school club, and complete a joint activity



PROJECT GPS TIE-IN:

Project GPS-themed fundraising activities combine traffic safety awareness with student-led events that raise funds to support YOVASO efforts while promoting traffic safety messaging.

- **Wash Away Bad Driving Car Wash**
 - *Host a car wash where student promote safe driving while raising funds for the club. Include safety signage, pledge banner and hand out tip cards.*
- **Road to Summer 5-K**
 - *Organize a 5K walk/run themed around getting to your destination safely. At each checkpoint, include safety signage and statistics and invite a victim advocate to speak at the event.*
- **Route Ready Snack Bags**
 - *Sell pre-packaged snack bags with safety messaging (ex. Fuel Up & Get Places Safely) to students during sporting events or lunches.*

MAKE THE
MESSAGE STICK





SPEAK UP & SHARE

ACTIVITY LOG

ACTIVITY

ACTIVITY DATE

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
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8. _____
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17. _____
18. _____
19. _____
20. _____

WHAT IS A FINAL REPORT?

The Project GPS Final Report is the final step in the project process. It allows schools to share what they accomplished during the project period and document how they implemented their activities.

WHAT INFORMATION WILL BE REPORTED?

In the report, participants will:

- Describe all activities completed, Creative Event details, and results from post project data collection
- Explain how Project GPS materials were distributed
- Provide an estimated reach (number of students, staff, families, or community members impacted)

Participants will also have the opportunity to provide feedback about project experience. Since Project GPS is a brand-new initiative, this feedback is especially valuable. All insights will help strengthen and improve the project.

**Final reports must be submitted in order to be eligible for competition judging.*

WHY IS THE FINAL REPORT IMPORTANT?

Completing the Project GPS Final Report helps demonstrate the project's impact to our grant providers, secure continued funding to keep the project **free** for all participants and ensure Project GPS: Get Places Safely continues guiding teens and communities in the right direction.

TO ACCESS THE FINAL REPORT LINK,
PLEASE VISIT
[YOVASO.ORG/PROJECT-GPS](https://yovaso.org/project-gps)



Spring Project 2026

Project GPS: Get Places Safely

***Thank you for participating in
YOVASO's peer-to-peer
traffic safety initiative,
Project GPS: Get Places Safely!***



Visit yovaso.org/project-gps
for all project resources!

YOVASO
YOUTH OF VIRGINIA SPEAK
OUT ABOUT TRAFFIC SAFETY