

Environmental Justice Planning Grants

Safe Journeys: Planning

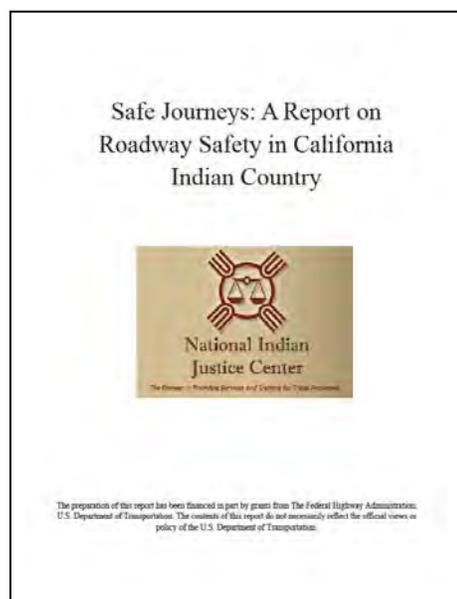
- **Grant Amount:** \$200,267
- **Grant Recipient:** Metropolitan Transportation Commission/National Indian Justice Center
- **County:** Sonoma

Project Area – Statewide

Project Focus – Transit services are almost nonexistent on many reservations or they run so infrequently that it becomes a burden on families to access basic services, especially for the elderly who depend on assistance to visit clinics. Not owning a car or limited transit service makes getting to work difficult, thereby contributing to high unemployment rates in tribal communities. Without vehicles or transit, tribal people of all ages must walk or bicycle or rely on friends and relatives for transportation. In many tribal areas in California, the existing roadways do not have facilities to support multiple modes of transportation. Sometimes, major highways bisect the reservation and contending with high speed traffic at intersections without proper signage or facilities is an everyday risk. For roads without pedestrian and bicycle facilities, walking and bike riding can be risky.

Project Goals – This grant project addresses the core causes of injuries and fatalities by creating an educational video presentation and companion workbook aimed at informing tribal members. The purpose of this tool kit is

to build tribal community transportation safety planning capacity by guiding and instructing California tribal communities on identifying risk factors and groups most at-risk for traffic injuries and fatalities; the basic steps to plan for local road and safety improvements; understanding the role of outside transportation planning consultants and effective use of consultants; data collection basics and building a stronger bridge between the community and the reporting system; generating local safety strategies; and communicating local safety issues to the regional and statewide levels. The video and workbook will be copied and shared freely with all California tribes to improve pedestrian and bicycle access and safety, driver safety and address long-standing issues of equity, neglect, and isolation in tribal areas by showing how tribal communities can participate as stakeholders in local and regional planning forums and generate immediate community-based solutions to safety issues.



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Community Outreach – The public participation plan for this project reflected involvement from different segments of the tribal community through previous, ongoing and proposed tribal outreach and engagement efforts. Tribal networking at these events allows tribes to communicate their local safety issues to other tribes, law enforcement and to Caltrans representatives and affords opportunities for mutual problem-solving. Some issues and strategies uncovered during this process included developing periodic meetings with law enforcement to discuss safety concerns, engaging youth in safety

planning, developing and maintaining workshops on child safety seat installation and developing model data collection tools to document anecdotal community data or accidents.

Project Outcome– The project culminated in a video titled Safe Journeys that details all of the various safety factors that affect Native American Tribal communities. In addition to the video, there are two accompanying resource manuals that include statistics and strategies for making mobility, motorized and non-motorized, safer in tribal communities.

Challenges

- There is confusion over tribal sovereignty rights and the lack of memoranda of understanding that have been established with the appropriate state and county agencies. Many of the reservations or rancherias do not have the financial resources to operate their own tribal police departments. In those instances private roads may not be patrolled by any law enforcement officers.
- In tribal communities, collecting accurate data is made more challenging by underreporting of traffic injuries and accidents due to people driving under the influence, without auto insurance and driving without a license.