




# I Know Everything

*Teen Driver Safety Action Toolkit*



**HEY, YOU'RE A TEEN.** You've reached an exciting milestone that's filled with newfound freedoms like driving. For as long as you can remember, you've probably been dreaming about the day you could drive yourself to school, a friend's house or the mall. Getting your driver's license is the first step to independence, but it comes with plenty of responsibility and risk. Despite what you may think or hear, driving is complex. It takes focus, lots of practice and commitment to become a skilled and safe driver.

That's why we created this toolkit. We're the Foundation for Advancing Alcohol Responsibility or FAAR. For nearly 25 years, we've been developing and implementing programs that fight drunk driving and underage drinking. We're also the people behind the dynamic and interactive teen driver safety program **IKnowEverything**. Working in partnership with Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA), we're bringing the **IKnowEverything** Challenge to schools across the nation. This interactive game-show style event introduces students to challenging scenarios and key problem-solving tasks that all drivers are likely to face behind the wheel.

In addition to helping teens learn about safe driving, FAAR is committed to helping teens find their voice. Teen driver safety is one of our nation's traffic safety success stories. The number of people under 21 who died in drunk driving crashes fell 78% from the record high of 5,215 in 1982 to 1,174 in 2012.<sup>1</sup> Crashes involving teens are down and fewer lives are being lost, but we're far from the point where the job is done. Did you know that motor vehicles crashes are the leading cause of death for your age group? In 2012, 2,823 teens 13 to 19 years of age died on our nation's roadways.<sup>2</sup> That's an average of seven teens every day.

Many adults and teens, just like you, are speaking out about teen driver safety. You're working to strengthen laws, educate parents and teens through school and community events, and engage the media. Their work is paying off — between 2007 and 2011 the number of teen drivers involved in fatal crashes dropped 44%.<sup>3</sup>

Have you ever thought about getting involved in this effort? Not sure what to do or where to start?

**Your voice is powerful!** Elected officials, reporters, and business and community leaders need and want to hear what you know and think. You also have the ability to influence your classmates, friends, younger siblings, even your parents, about this important issue.

Like FCCLA, this toolkit provides you personal growth and leadership development opportunities. It's designed to help you learn more about teen driver safety, assess what your state is doing, connect with key partners, and formulate an action plan. From identifying gaps in your state's driver licensing laws to raising awareness among your friends through social media, you'll find everything you need to put you on the road to becoming a teen driver safety advocate.

**Read on to learn how you can speak out and help save lives!**

#### SOURCES

- 1 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Fatality Analysis Reporting System, 12/13
- 2 Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, Teenagers, 2012. [http://www.iihs.org/iihs/topics/t/teenagers/fatality\\_facts/teenagers](http://www.iihs.org/iihs/topics/t/teenagers/fatality_facts/teenagers)
- 3 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Safety in Numbers, Oct. 2013 [http://www.nhtsa.gov/nhtsa/Safety1nNum3ers/october2013/9972\\_S1N\\_Oct13\\_Iss7.html](http://www.nhtsa.gov/nhtsa/Safety1nNum3ers/october2013/9972_S1N_Oct13_Iss7.html)

# ABOUT

## THE PROGRAMS

### **The Foundation for Advancing Alcohol Responsibility**

**FAAR** (formerly The Century Council) leads the fight to eliminate drunk driving and underage drinking and promotes responsible decision-making regarding beverage alcohol. Funded for more than 23 years by the nation's leading distillers, we bring individuals, families and communities together to guide a lifetime of conversations around alcohol responsibility. For more information, visit [www.responsibility.org](http://www.responsibility.org).

### **IKnowEverything**

**IKnowEverything** is an integrated teen driver safety program that highlights the issues of drunk driving and distracted driving, and reiterates that parents have the most influence on their teen's driving behaviors. The program also reinforces that teens already "know everything" about how to be a safe driver and covers critical topics including drinking alcohol underage and driving, distracted driving, late night driving, speeding, number of passengers, and license restrictions. For more information, visit [www.iknoweverything.com](http://www.iknoweverything.com).

### **Family, Career and Community Leaders of America**

**Family, Career and Community Leaders of America** (FCCLA), is a dynamic and effective national student organization that helps young men and women become leaders and address important personal, family, work, and societal issues through Family and Consumer Sciences education. FCCLA has 200,000 members and more than 5,500 chapters from 49 state associations, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. The organization has involved more than ten million youth since its founding in 1945.

**FCCLA:** The Ultimate Leadership Experience is unique among youth organizations because its programs are planned and run by members. It is the only career and technical in-school student organization with the family as its central focus. Participation in national programs and chapter activities helps members become strong leaders in their families, careers, and communities. For more information, visit [www.fcclainc.org](http://www.fcclainc.org).

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## What is advocacy?

### Ad\*vo\*cate

To speak in favor of; recommend

A person who argues for a cause; supporter or defender

An advocate is someone who works to build support for an issue. For purposes of this toolkit, an advocate is someone working to help prevent teen driver crashes so no one is injured or killed.

As an advocate, it's your job to educate important groups of people -- legislators, the media, parents, your peers. You do that by sharing information and offering a solution. You may already be an advocate for teen driver safety or some other issue and not even realize it. If you've ever stood up for someone who was being treated unfairly, participated in a meeting where you expressed your opinion or posted a message on Facebook encouraging your friends to do something, you engaged in advocacy.

Sometimes advocacy involves lobbying. That's when you communicate with an elected official and ask him or her to take a position on a specific piece of legislation. Many teens have played a critical role in lobbying for laws that address teen driving. Efforts to educate and influence legislators and other policymakers' opinions are allowed by law and an integral part of our democratic process. In fact, public officials welcome input from well-informed citizens and want to hear specifically from teens about teen driver safety.

### Tips for Effective Advocacy

You have the perfect credentials to be an effective teen driver safety advocate — you're a teen, you drive (or ride with friends who do) and you want to be safe. But effective advocacy doesn't just happen. You have to do your homework. That starts by researching the issue. Next, you must develop your message so you know exactly what you want to say. Then you communicate that message clearly and succinctly to an individual or group to capture their attention. And finally, you provide a call to action.

#### AN EFFECTIVE ADVOCATE IS...

**Confident:** Recognize that one person — YOU — can make a difference. (Just think how Rosa Parks' simple act of defiance helped jump-start the civil rights movement or how Pakistani teenager, Malala Yousafzai, is raising awareness worldwide about the importance of every child receiving an education.)

**Respectful:** Take the high road and agree to disagree when someone offers a differing viewpoint.

**Focused and Concise:** Respect your listener's time and attention span by keeping your message short and to the point. Most people can only process a maximum of one to three things at any given time.

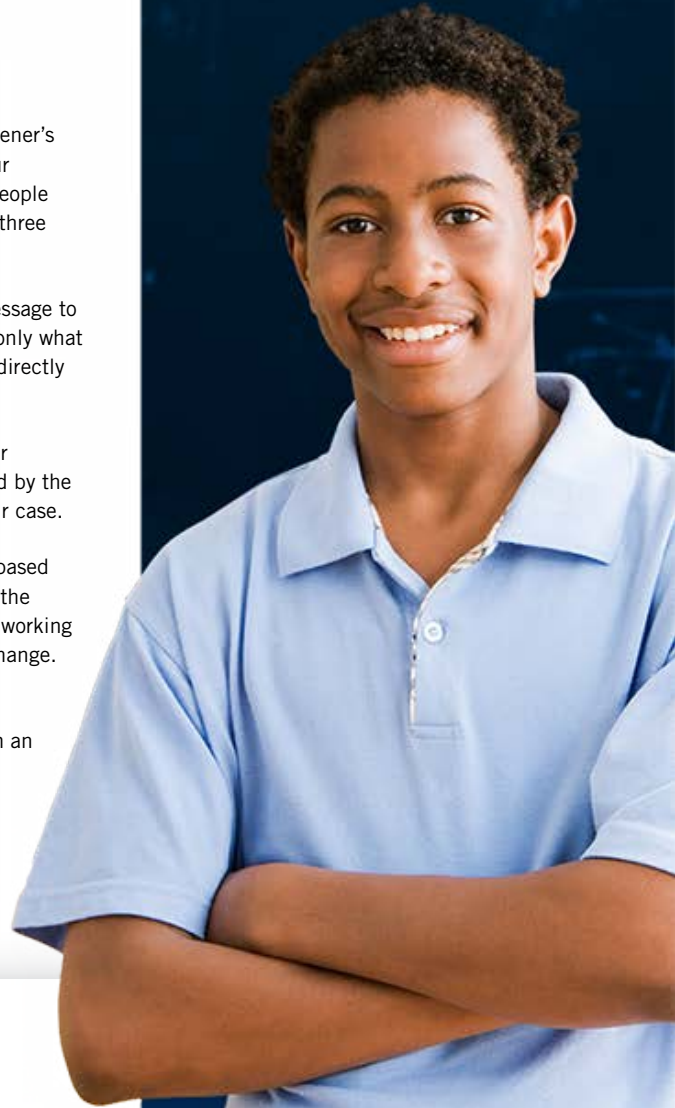
**Impactful and Engaging:** Tailor your message to your audience so that it addresses not only what they need to know, but how your issue directly affects them.

**Relevant:** Tell how real people from your community or state have been impacted by the issue and/or use local data to make your case.

**Practical:** Determine what to strive for based on available resources, the make-up of the Legislature and other factors. Consider working for incremental rather than sweeping change.

**Action-Oriented:** State what you'd like your audience to do and then give them an immediate way to do it.

CONFIDENT  
RESPECTFUL  
FOCUSED  
CONCISE  
IMPACTFUL  
ENGAGING  
RELEVANT  
PRACTICAL  
ACTION-ORIENTED



## What should I advocate for?

Now that you know what advocacy is, what do you want to advocate for? A good place to start is by understanding the magnitude of the teen driver crash problem.

First the good news. The number of teen drivers killed and involved in fatal crashes declined 43% and 44%, respectively, between 2007 and 2011.<sup>4</sup> Today's generation of teens is far more likely, than their parents, to refrain from getting behind the wheel after drinking.<sup>5</sup> As a result, the number of people under 21 who died in drunk driving crashes fell 76% from the record high of 5,215 in 1982 to 1,249 in 2011.<sup>6</sup>

Contrary to public opinion, teens 16 to 18 years of age are also less likely than 19- to 24-year-olds and 25- to 39-year olds to make or take cell phone calls or text while driving. These same teens also are more likely than older teens and young adults to view talking on a cell phone or texting while driving as a serious threat to their personal safety.<sup>7</sup>

Despite these positive findings and the fact that teens drive less than all but the oldest motorists, driving poses considerable risk for you and your peers. Mile for mile, teens are involved in three times as many fatal crashes as all other drivers.<sup>8</sup> Why? Teens aren't bad drivers, you're simply not experienced. That coupled with developmental and behavioral issues contribute significantly to what happens behind the wheel.

What does that mean? The part of the teen brain that controls impulse, decision making and judgment — the prefrontal cortex — isn't developed yet. That makes some, but not all teens, prone to risky behavior. Research also confirms that teens who thrill seek, act aggressively, succumb to peer pressure, or fail to view deviant behavior as inappropriate, are more likely to be involved in motor vehicle crashes.<sup>9</sup>

What else should you know about the teen crash problem? Here are ten key facts from FAAR's teen driver safety program, **IKnowEverything**, and several other sources. Under each fact, you'll find a research question(s) to help you assess the problem in your state. State-specific information may be available through your **State Highway Safety Office (SHSO)**, driver licensing agency, **teen safe driving coalition** (not all states have one), state police, or local **AAA public affairs contact**. As you obtain state data, be sure to note the source and the year(s) that it corresponds to.

### What you should know about the teen crash problem...

1. Motor vehicles crashes are the leading cause of death for teens in the U.S. In 2011, 2,105 teen drivers were involved in fatal crashes. Almost half of those teen drivers died.<sup>10</sup>

How many teen drivers were involved in motor vehicle crashes in your state?  
What percentage died? \_\_\_\_\_ (cite years \_\_\_\_\_ and data source \_\_\_\_\_)

2. Drivers in their first month of licensure are nearly twice as likely to crash as they are after gaining two years of experience.

How many teen drivers crashed last year in your state? # \_\_\_\_\_ (cite year \_\_\_\_\_ and data source \_\_\_\_\_)

Note: The most current data for your state may be two or more years old due to a lag in collecting and posting crash reports.

3. 57% of crashes where a teen driver is partially responsible involved going too fast, not paying attention or failing to yield.

What are the top three causes of teen driver crashes in your state? 1 \_\_\_\_\_, 2 \_\_\_\_\_, 3 \_\_\_\_\_ (cite years \_\_\_\_\_ and data source \_\_\_\_\_)

4. 18% of crashes that injure someone are caused by a distracted driver.

How many distracted driver crashes occurred last year in your state? \_\_\_\_\_ (cite year \_\_\_\_\_ and data source \_\_\_\_\_)

*(Identify teen distracted driving crashes in your state. Search online for news articles and save the links.)*

5. More than 50% of high school students say they text at least "sometimes" while they drive.

What percentage of teens in your state admit to texting while driving? \_\_\_\_\_ % (cite year \_\_\_\_\_ and data source \_\_\_\_\_) Note: Many SHSOs conduct annual surveys to gauge motorists' behaviors and segment the findings by age.

#### SOURCES

- 4 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Safety in Numbers, Oct. 2013. [http://www.nhtsa.gov/nhtsa/Safety1nNum3ers/october2013/9972\\_S1N\\_Oct13\\_Iss7.html](http://www.nhtsa.gov/nhtsa/Safety1nNum3ers/october2013/9972_S1N_Oct13_Iss7.html)
- 5 Nichols, J., Haire, E., Solomon, M., Ellison-Potter, P., & Cosgrove, L. (2011) Evaluation of teen seat belt demonstration projects in Colorado and Nevada. U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Washington, DC.
- 6 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration as cited on the IKnowEverything website (2013). <http://iiknoweverything.com/resources/statistics>
- 7 Hamilton, B.C., Arnold, L. S., & Teft, B.C. (2013). Distracted driving and perceptions of hands-free technologies. Findings from the 2013 Traffic Safety Culture Index, November 2013. AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, Washington, DC.
- 8 Insurance Institute for Highway Safety as cited on the I Know Everything website (2013).
- 9 Shope, J. T. (2006). Influences on youthful driving behavior and their potential for guiding interventions to reduce crashes. Injury Prevention, 9-14. (DOI: 10.1136/ip.2006.011874).
- 10 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Safety in Numbers, Oct. 2013 [http://www.nhtsa.gov/nhtsa/Safety1nNum3ers/october2013/9972\\_S1N\\_Oct13\\_Iss7.html](http://www.nhtsa.gov/nhtsa/Safety1nNum3ers/october2013/9972_S1N_Oct13_Iss7.html)

## What you should know about the teen crash problem...

Do you know of a teen(s) who was involved in a crash or had a near-miss due to texting? (Interview that person to learn more about what happened.)

6. In 2010, 30% of teen drivers who were killed in crashes had a Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) level of .01% or higher.

What percentage of teen driving fatal crashes in your state involved alcohol? \_\_\_\_\_ (cite year \_\_\_\_\_ and data source \_\_\_\_\_ ) Note: All states have zero tolerance laws for drinking and driving under age 21.

7. More than half of all teenage passenger deaths in motor vehicles occurred in vehicles driven by another teen.

How many teenage passengers died last year in your state in motor vehicle crashes where a teen was behind the wheel? # \_\_\_\_\_ of teens (cite years \_\_\_\_\_ and data source \_\_\_\_\_ )

8. The fatal crash risk for teen drivers increases incrementally with 1, 2 or 3+ passengers.

How many teen driver crashes involving 2 or more passengers occurred last year in your state? \_\_\_\_\_ (cite year \_\_\_\_\_ and data source \_\_\_\_\_ )

(Search online for news articles detailing teen driver crashes involving multiple passengers and save the links.)

9. More than half of all fatal crashes that occur at night and involve 16-year-olds happen before midnight.

What percentage of fatal teen driver crashes in your state happen between 9 p.m. and midnight? \_\_\_\_\_ % (cite year \_\_\_\_\_ and data source \_\_\_\_\_ )

Based on crash data, what is the most dangerous time period for teen drivers in your state to be on the road? \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm to \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm (cite year \_\_\_\_\_ and data source \_\_\_\_\_ )

10. Over half of the teen drivers who died in motor vehicle crashes in 2011 were not wearing seat belts. When the teen driver in a fatal crash was unrestrained, almost 80% of his passengers were unrestrained, too.<sup>11</sup>

What percentage of teen drivers and teen passengers involved in fatal crashes last year in your state were unrestrained? \_\_\_\_\_ drivers, \_\_\_\_\_ passengers (cite year \_\_\_\_\_ and data source \_\_\_\_\_ )

What is your state's current seat belt usage rate? \_\_\_\_\_ % (cite year \_\_\_\_\_ and data source \_\_\_\_\_ ) Note: Every SHSO conducts an annual seat belt observational survey to determine seat belt use by front seat occupants. Some states also assess back seat use and/or survey motorists to gauge seat belt use in various seating positions. This information may also be segmented by age.

### SOURCE

11 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Safety in Numbers, Oct. 2013 [http://www.nhtsa.gov/nhtsa/Safety1nNum3ers/october2013/9972\\_S1N\\_Oct13\\_lss7.html](http://www.nhtsa.gov/nhtsa/Safety1nNum3ers/october2013/9972_S1N_Oct13_lss7.html)

## How do teen driving laws measure up in my state?

Now that you've investigated the extent of the teen crash problem in your state, the next step is to review your state's teen driving policies.

All states and the District of Columbia have a novice driver licensing law in place to help teens gain driving skill, while limiting exposure to high risk situations such as driving late at night, with multiple passengers and/or while using a cell phone. It's called graduated driving licensing or GDL.

First introduced in the mid-1990s, GDL is a proven tool that's responsible for 20-40% reductions in teen driver crashes.<sup>12</sup> GDL is a three-stage system that includes a learner or supervised practice driving stage, an intermediate stage that allows for unsupervised driving but includes restrictions that address risk (i.e., no passengers and/or driving late at night), and a full licensure stage where all restrictions are lifted.

While every state has a GDL law, not every GDL law is exactly the same and some are considered better than others. In addition to FAAR, federal agencies such as the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the National Transportation Safety Board and the Centers for Disease Control along with safety advocacy groups such as AAA, the National Safety Council, Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety, and the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety have identified elements of an effective GDL program.

How does your state's GDL law measure up? Use this checklist to identify shortcomings in your state's GDL law. A shortcoming presents the opportunity to advocate for change. Keep in mind that all of the elements listed below are important, but the following five are critical because they get to the heart of why teens crash:

- delaying full licensure (a good thing because of the developmental and behavioral issues discussed earlier),

- restricting or limiting passengers and banning texting and/or the use of electronic devices (key sources of teen distraction),
- keeping teens off the road late at night (when you're likely to be fatigued and/or joyriding), and
- requiring seat belt use (critical due to teens' elevated crash risk and the lifesaving benefit of proper restraint).<sup>13</sup>

A summary of state GDL programs can be found on the **IKnowEverything** and **Governors Highway Safety Association** websites. Be sure to check your state's driver licensing agency and **highway safety office** websites for more detailed information about your state's GDL program and bookmark the links for easy access.

### SOURCES

- 12 Williams, A. F. (2011). Commentary: Graduated licensing—moving forward or standing still (DOI: 10.1080/15389688.2011.573353).
- 13 Fischer, P. (2013). Promoting parent involvement in teen driving: An in-depth look at the importance and the initiatives. Governors Highway Safety Association: Washington, DC.

**Elements of an Effective GDL Program\***

**My State's GDL Program**

*(check all that apply)*

**Permit or Supervised Driving Stage**

\_\_\_\_\_ (NAME)

Minimum starting age of 15 ½	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pass a vision and knowledge test	<input type="checkbox"/>
Minimum 6-month holding period	<input type="checkbox"/>
Complete basic driver training	<input type="checkbox"/>
Minimum 40 hours of practice driving, including driving at night supervised by a licensed driver at least 21 years of age	<input type="checkbox"/>
No use of hand-held or hands-free cell phones or other wireless communications devices while driving	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mandatory seat belt use by all vehicle occupants	<input type="checkbox"/>
Zero tolerance for alcohol use	<input type="checkbox"/>
Minimum 6-months with no at-fault crashes or traffic violations before proceeding to the next stage	<input type="checkbox"/>
Distinctly distinguishable document to aid in enforcement of the permit provisions	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mandatory parent orientation/education program	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pass a road test administered by an accredited agency before progressing to the next stage	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Intermediate Stage**

\_\_\_\_\_ (NAME)

Minimum starting age of 16	<input type="checkbox"/>
Minimum 6-month holding period	<input type="checkbox"/>
No driving between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. (no exceptions for school activities or employment)	<input type="checkbox"/>
No more than 1 passenger under 21 years of age unless accompanied by an adult at least 21 years of age	<input type="checkbox"/>
No use of hand-held or hands-free cell phones or other wireless communications devices while driving	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mandatory seat belt use by all vehicle occupants	<input type="checkbox"/>
Zero tolerance for alcohol use	<input type="checkbox"/>
Minimum 6-months with no at-fault crashes or traffic violations before proceeding to the next stage	<input type="checkbox"/>
Distinctly distinguishable document to aid in enforcement of the intermediate provisions	<input type="checkbox"/>
Take and pass an advanced driver's education course	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Full Licensure Stage**

Minimum starting age of 18	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pass a final road test	<input type="checkbox"/>
Distinctly distinguishable document	<input type="checkbox"/>

My state has the following teen driving policies/regulations not included in the list:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

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4. \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_


*\*Contains all of the provisions mandated under MAP-21 (Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act)*

## Who is advocating for teen driver safety and stronger GDL laws?

Now that you know what's in your GDL law and, even more importantly, what isn't, who can you partner with in your local community or state to advocate for change? It's likely there are individuals and organizations who are already working to strengthen your state's GDL law and/or advocate for initiatives that help keep teens safe whether you're in the driver or passenger seat.

*Consider contacting the following organizations in your state to learn what they are doing and how you might partner with them:*

- AAA
- FAAR's IKnowEverything program
- FCCLA Chapters
- State Safety Council
- State Highway Safety Offices
- SADD Chapters and other teen-led safety/leadership organizations
- MADD Chapters
- Emergency Nurses
- Pediatric and Family Practitioners
- Children's Hospitals and Trauma Centers
- Teen Safe Driving Coalitions
- County and State Traffic Officers Association
- County and State Chiefs of Police Associations
- County Sheriff and State Sheriff's Associations
- Local alcohol safety action programs

 GDL is a proven tool that's responsible for

# 20-40%

reductions in teen driver crashes

## What do I need to know about my state legislature?

Legislators care about issues that affect their constituents. What's a constituent? A person who authorizes another to act on his or her behalf, such as a voter in a district represented by an elected official.

A district is made up of towns where voters live. While you may not be old enough to vote for the legislators who represent your district, you're still entitled to share your opinion with them.

Now that you've researched the extent of your state's teen driver crash problem and reviewed your GDL law to identify gaps, it's a good bet you probably know more about teen driver safety than most of your legislators do. That's not because they aren't interested. Legislators must deal with many issues, so they rely on their constituents—you—to be a resource on teen driver safety and needed legislation.

If you would like to advocate for a stronger teen driver safety law, the process starts by speaking with your legislators. If they decide to introduce a bill\* addressing your concern, they must follow a formal process. This process is dictated by your state's constitution+ and, as this graphic illustrates, involves a number of steps. It can sometimes take several years or more for a bill to become law. Every state legislature has passed and enacted a GDL law. Some have also amended their GDL and/or other motor vehicle laws that are credited with saving the lives of teens and other roadway users.

Who are your state legislators? A parent or guardian, a teacher or another adult who lives in your community, can help. Ask them to help you determine what district you live in and who represents your district at the state capitol. Armed with this information, you can then research your legislators' areas of expertise, committee affiliations, legislation that they have or are currently sponsoring, voting record, and more. The more you know about your legislators, the more you can tailor your teen driver safety message to enlist their help.

The **National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL)** links to state legislature websites, which typically list elected officials by district and governing body (House or Assembly and Senate). You can also learn more about how legislatures are structured, the legislative process and key legislative terms on the NCSL website.



## How a bill becomes law

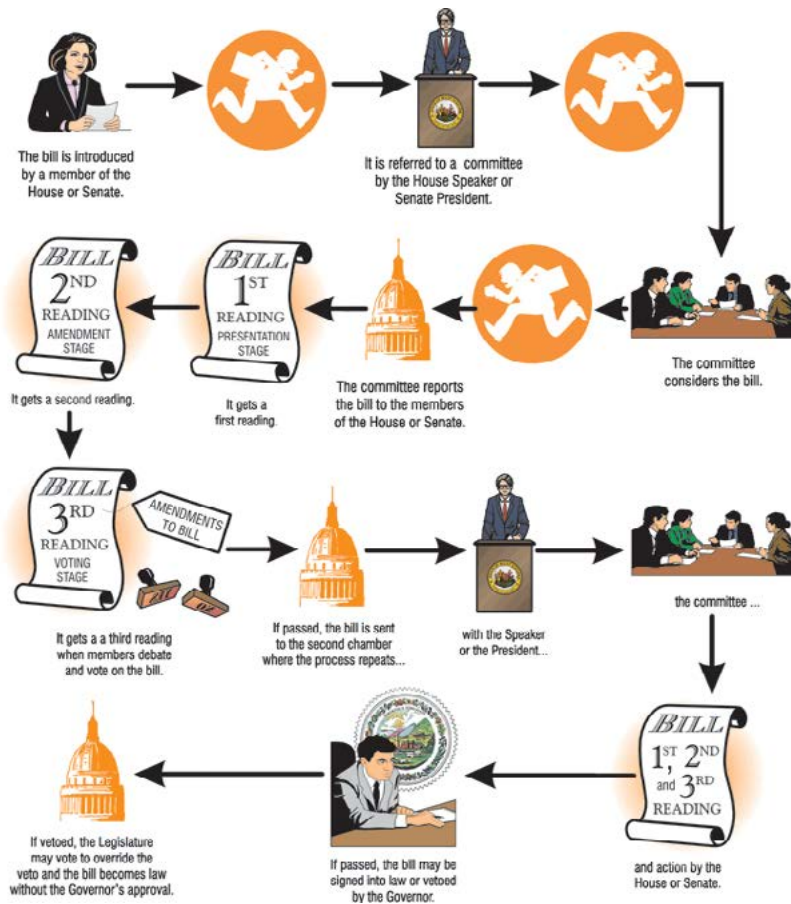


Image courtesy of West Virginia Department of Commerce ([www.wvcommerce.org](http://www.wvcommerce.org))

▶ A bill is a draft of a proposed law presented to the legislature for consideration.

▶ A constitution is the fundamental principles of your state that guarantee the powers and duties of the government and certain rights to its citizens.

## How do I obtain a meeting with my state legislator and once I have a meeting, what do I say and do?

Obtaining a meeting with a state legislator can sometimes be difficult, but is not impossible, you just have to ask.

The best way is to call the legislator's district office or make a formal written request by email or letter. In either case, be sure to start your request by indicating you're a constituent. Then point out that you're a teen and would like to meet with the legislator to talk about an issue you know very well – teen driver safety. Point out that what you'd like to discuss isn't just a teen or parent issue, but one that affects everyone on the road.

Keep your call or written communication short – no more than 5 minutes or one page. If possible, include several facts, statistics and/or reference a local teen driver safety incident. Stay on topic and discuss only one issue in your written communication or phone call. Be sure to include a call to action that tells your legislator what you want him or her to do.

Your request for a meeting is likely to be handled by a member of the legislator's staff such as an aide or scheduler. This person may ask for more information and/or if you're advocating for a particular bill. Before making your call, practice what you're going to say with a friend or parent. The more you rehearse, the more confident you'll be when asking for the meeting, and when explaining the reason for it. If you're sending a written request, ask a parent or friend to read your email or letter and offer input as well as point out any typos.

If you're unable to schedule a meeting with your legislator, don't give up. Check legislators' websites to learn where they'll be speaking in your community and try to speak with them even if it's just for a few minutes. Some legislators schedule listening sessions or town hall meetings to gain insight from constituents on key issues. Take advantage of this opportunity to briefly raise your issue and offer to meet with your legislator at his or her district office to discuss it in more detail.



## Sample Phone Call

Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I'm a teen and I live in Representative/Senator \_\_\_\_\_'s district.

I'm calling to request a meeting with Representative/Senator \_\_\_\_\_ to speak about teen driver safety. While teen driver safety is an issue that impacts my friends and me and our families, it also impacts everyone else because we all share the road.

I'm concerned because teens in our state represent \_\_\_\_\_% of licensed drivers, but are involved in \_\_\_\_\_% of crashes. Last year, \_\_\_\_\_ (#) teens died in car crashes in our state. Teens have the highest crash risk of any age group on the road. While our graduated driver license law is helping to address teen crash risk, there are still gaps in the law such as \_\_\_\_\_.

I'd like to ask Representative/Senator to sponsor legislation or support bill \_\_\_\_\_ (#), which would address this gap.

Thank you and please let me know when I can meet with Representative/Senator \_\_\_\_\_. If you need to check his or her schedule and get back to me, I can be reached at \_\_\_\_\_ (phone #/email).



## Sample Letter/Email

Dear Representative/Senator \_\_\_\_\_ :

As a constituent in your district and a teen, I would like to meet with you to discuss sponsoring legislation (or supporting bill # \_\_\_\_\_) to address a gap(s) in our graduated driver licensing (GDL) law, which is putting my friends and me, and all roadway users at risk.

Teens have the highest crash risk of any age group on the road. In \_\_\_\_\_ (state), teens represent \_\_\_\_\_% of licensed drivers, but are involved in \_\_\_\_\_% of crashes. Last year, \_\_\_\_\_ (#) teens died in car crashes in our state. (Cite a recent teen crash that resulted in injury or death or share information about your own experience as a teen driver.)

GDL is a proven tool that is responsible for 20-40% reductions in teen driver crashes. GDL is a three-stage system that includes a learner or supervised practice driving stage, an intermediate stage that allows for unsupervised driving but includes restrictions that address risk (i.e., no passengers and/or driving late at night), and a full licensure stage where all restrictions are lifted.

Every state has a GDL law, but not every GDL law is exactly the same and some are considered better than others. \_\_\_\_\_ (state's) GDL law would be better if teen drivers were required to \_\_\_\_\_ (i.e., be off the road by 10 p.m., limit the number of friends they can transport, wait until 17 to obtain a driver's license).

Thank you for hard work and for your consideration of my request. I look forward to meeting with you to speak more about this issue and answer your questions. I can be reached at \_\_\_\_\_ (phone/email).

Sincerely,



## Tips for a Successful Meeting

While your goal is to meet with the legislator, don't be disappointed if you're offered a meeting with a staff member instead. Successful advocates recognize that developing a good relationship with legislative staff can lead to direct contact with a legislator over time. Regardless of whom you meet with, remember that you never get a second chance to make a first impression. **So be sure to:**

### DRESS PROFESSIONALLY.

Practice what you plan to discuss including what you specifically want the legislator to do – sponsor or vote for a bill, talk with other legislators, take an interest in teen driver safety, etc. Plan for the meeting to last no more than 5-10 minutes.

Research your legislator. What is his or her position on teen driver safety and/or voting record on GDL and/or teen driving laws? Is he or she a parent/grandparent of a teen driver? Was there a teen driver crash in his or her district?

Prepare a teen driver safety document to "leave behind." This one-pager should include your name, phone number and email address, as well as information about any teen driver safety group you're involved with such as FCCLA, SADD or a local coalition. This is also a good way to establish yourself as a teen driver safety resource. (A teen driver safety infographic is available from **IKnowEverything**.)

Be punctual, patient and polite. A legislator might get called away for another meeting, a voting session or phone call. If your meeting is interrupted, don't get mad or upset. Offer to continue the meeting with a staff member or when the legislator is available.

Ask for input, take notes and be responsive. Ask your legislator if he or she has any questions. If you can't answer a question, write it down so you have a record of exactly what was asked. Then get back to him or her with an answer as soon as possible.

Respect differing opinions. Your legislator may not share your point of view. If that happens, keep your discussion positive and ask what it would take to change his or her mind. Offer to work with him or her on other teen and/or community issues on which you both agree.

Ask to take a photo with your legislator. Let him or her know that you'd like to promote your meeting to discuss teen driver safety on social media, your organization's website and/or in your local or school newspaper. Ask if he or she would like a copy of the photo.

Say thank you. Close the meeting by thanking your legislator and/or his or her staff for meeting with you and for any support he or she agrees to provide.

Send a formal thank you. This can be a hand-written note or an email. Include an invitation to speak to your group or at your school and your contact information.

Follow your legislator on social media. Many elected officials have a Facebook page and/or Twitter account where they post information about bills they're sponsoring, issues they're supporting and/or upcoming events and activities where they'll be speaking. Liking, commenting and sharing your legislators' posts or Tweets is a good way to bolster your standing with them and build a relationship.



## Sample thank you letter/email

Dear Representative/Senator \_\_\_\_\_ :

I want to thank you (your staff) for meeting with me on \_\_\_\_\_ (date) to discuss teen driver safety.

As I indicated at our meeting (give a brief explanation of what was discussed).

With respect to the questions you raised during our meeting, I provided answers to your staff on \_\_\_\_\_ (date). I have enclosed (attached) my responses just in case you didn't receive them.

As we discussed, you (your staff) agreed to (indicate what he or she agreed to do or position taken). I'd like to invite you to attend a meeting of \_\_\_\_\_ (your group) or visit my high school to speak about this. I would be happy to work with your scheduler to set this up.

Again, thank you for giving me the opportunity to discuss teen driver safety with you (your staff). If you or your staff needs additional information or assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me at \_\_\_\_\_ (phone #/email).

Sincerely,



## Sample Legislative Contact Form

Advocates keep a record of all contacts they have with state legislators and others who can help advance their cause. Noting what you discussed as well as what you need to follow-up on will be helpful as you work to expand your outreach. If you're part of a group working on teen driver safety, sharing this information with them will ensure that everyone is aware of your advocacy efforts, without duplication.

Date of visit or written contact \_\_\_\_\_

Legislator/Person Contacted \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Website \_\_\_\_\_

Social Media \_\_\_\_\_

Issues discussed: \_\_\_\_\_

Outcome of Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Needed Follow-up: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_



Remember that you never get a second chance to make a **FIRST IMPRESSION.**

## What else can I do to advocate for teen driver safety?

Who else could benefit from your teen driver safety message? How about your peers? Your friends and classmates are or soon will be teen drivers, so sharing what you know will benefit them. Using social media is one way to get their attention; another is to bring **IKnowEverything** to your school.

What's **IKnowEverything**? **IKnowEverything** is a resource designed to jumpstart a safe driving dialogue between teens and parents. The resource includes a facilitator's guide that highlights research-based, teen driver safety facts and key messages. It also includes a short video that frames these messages and prompts discussion. The program materials were parent and teen-tested through focus groups and surveys and earned rave reviews for their impact and relevancy.

Your student organization may want to partner with your school's Parent Teacher Association/Organization (PTA/O) or other group to host a teen driver safety night using the **IKnowEverything** resource. (All of the materials, including the video, may be downloaded from the **IKnowEverything** website.) Many schools host teen driver safety activities in conjunction with back to school nights, prior to prom and/or as part of their driver education program. Some school tie attendance to campus parking privileges and/or prom bids, while others use raffles (i.e., gift cards, in-car instruction, movie tickets, premium parking spaces at school) to encourage teens and their parents to participate.

Working in partnership with FCCLA, FAAR also developed the **IKnowEverything** Challenge and is making it available to schools across the country. FCCLA Chapters and other student-led groups are working with their advisors, administrators and teachers to host school assemblies that test students' knowledge of safe driving. Using a fast-paced, quiz show-style format that doesn't preach, teens answer questions about distracted and impaired driving, graduated driver licensing and more. The focus is on helping you and your peers recognize what you can do to protect yourselves whether behind the wheel or in the passenger seat.

To learn more about bringing the **IKnowEverything** Challenge to your school, visit us at [www.iknoweverything.com](http://www.iknoweverything.com).



## Tips for Hosting a Successful Teen Driver Safety Event

It takes a lot of planning and hard work to host a successful teen driver safety event. Here's a handy checklist that outlines tasks to address before, during and after your event. Be sure to allow plenty of time, don't try to do it alone and, most importantly, have fun!

### BEFORE YOUR EVENT

1. Form a planning committee that includes representatives from all of the sponsoring organizations (i.e., FCCLA Chapter and/or other student groups, advisor/teacher, school administration, PTA/O) and decide what your event will be (i.e., school assembly, teen driving night, community rally) and the theme. Appoint a chair who calls and leads meetings, ensures tasks are completed on time, etc.
2. Select the date and location of your event and confirm the facility is available. Don't forget to check school and community calendars; you don't want your event competing with another. Once confirmed, post your event on school and community calendars and bulletin boards.
3. Identify who will speak and confirm their availability. If inviting outside speakers (i.e., elected officials, police officers, teen driver safety advocates), make your request in writing (mail and/or email). Provide as much information about your event as possible (who, what, when, where, why) and include a response deadline. Also include the name, phone number and email address for a point of contact who can answer questions. Once they accept, ask that they share presentation materials (i.e., video, PowerPoint, handout) with you in advance.
4. Secure all materials (i.e., **IKnowEverything** resources, handouts, giveaways, prizes) needed for your event including the **IKnowEverything** resources and/or **IKnowEverything** Challenge materials. If ordering specialty items, allow at least 30-60 days for production and delivery.
5. Publicize your event. Send a press release to the local press and announce it on social media. Identify a hashtag for your event and begin Tweeting and posting on Instagram about it well in advance. Develop a promotional message that can be read during school morning announcements, by your school radio and/or television station, and posted on outside signage.



## How do I engage the press?

The press plays a critical role in increasing awareness of teen driver safety and the impact novice drivers have on all roadway users. But newspaper, radio and television reporters, editors and producers don't know a lot about teen driver safety. Media coverage is often prompted by a fatal crash or the introduction of legislation calling for tighter driving and/or licensing restrictions on you and your peers.

As an advocate, it's your job to educate the media about teen driver safety and help them identify potential *news hooks* so coverage is more frequent and consistent. News hooks are a reason to cover a story. It is something unique that will help the reporter get readers interested in their report.

As a teen advocating for teen driver safety, you bring a unique perspective to the discussion. That in itself is a potential news hook. But you can also work with the press to bring teen driving data, the foundation of many news stories, to life. While coverage discussing how many teens are hurt or killed in crashes is newsworthy, helping a reporter dig deeper to discover *when* (after school, at night, on a certain day of the week), *where* (on highways, local roads, near schools) and *why* (distraction, inexperience, speed, alcohol), will make for a better and more compelling story. Offer your teenage insight and it's a homerun.

By providing this information to the press, you also establish yourself as a key resource. Reporters like experts and are more likely to listen the next time you pitch a story idea or ask them to cover your teen driver safety event. Also, if a teen driving crash occurs in your community or state, there's a good bet the reporter will reach out to you for comment.

One of the best ways to introduce yourself and your cause to the press is by writing a letter to the editor (letter) or an opinion editorial (op-ed) for your local newspaper or community website. A timely, well-written letter or op-ed can influence public policy and opinion, as well as prompt an editor, producer or reporter to reach out to you to learn more about your issue. Write a letter or op-ed to share your opinion about a recent event such as a rally at your school or a teen driver crash, respond to a news story or editorial that appeared in the newspaper or on the website, or call attention to an observance such as National Teen Driver Safety Week, Global Youth Traffic Safety Month or Alcohol Awareness Month or a legislative initiative.

A press release is another tool advocates use to generate media interest and/or coverage in print (newspaper), broadcast (TV/radio) and online media. A press release typically announces an upcoming event ("Teen driver safety rally at State Capitol"), research finding or new data ("Stronger Licensing Laws Shown to Reduce Teen Crashes") or an organization's viewpoint ("More Parent Education about State GDL Law Needed"). It should be written so that the most important information is in the first paragraph and the less important information follows (that's called the inverted or upside-down pyramid style). The first paragraph should also answer six key questions: who, what, when, where, why, and how?

### SEVERAL DAYS BEFORE YOUR EVENT

6. Hold a final planning committee meeting. Review your task list to make sure you've addressed everything and reconfirm everyone's roles and responsibilities on event day. Don't forget to assign someone to greet your speakers, work with the press, take photos, Tweet during the event, and monitor how everything is going.
7. Reconfirm with your speakers and ask if they've made any changes to their presentation materials. If they have, ask that they email the latest version to you before day's end and bring it on a flash drive.
8. Decorate the facility, load all presentations onto the audio visual equipment and check that it's working, and inventory all materials.
9. Call or email local reporters to remind them of the event and continue to publicize it on social media.

### THE DAY OF YOUR EVENT

10. Confirm that everyone who has been assigned a task is in attendance and ready to go.
11. Greet and welcome your speakers, and upload their presentation materials if not done in advance.
12. Be on the lookout for the press and obtain their contact information and media affiliation. Let them know that the event is being photographed and offer to share images.
13. Take lots of photos that showcase your speakers, the audience and volunteers having fun. Post them on social media and Tweet about what is happening using your event hashtag.
14. Monitor how the event is going. Is the audience engaged? Is the AV working? Are there enough seats, handout materials?

### AFTER YOUR EVENT

15. Post event photos on your school website and social media. Check for and link to local press coverage of your event and share it with FAAR for inclusion in their **IKnowEverything** blog.
16. Send a written thank you note to each speaker that includes a photo of him or her interacting with students or a link to event photos.
17. Convene a planning committee meeting to assess your event (What did/didn't work?) and to celebrate your accomplishment. You worked hard, so take time to pat yourselves on the back.



## Tips for Engaging the Press

Whether you're writing a letter to the editor, op-ed or press release, or contacting a reporter by phone or email:

- Do your homework. Check out local reporters' twitter feeds, read the local newspapers' websites, watch local TV report news programs to get a feel for the type of news they cover and make a list of the names of reporters and anchors that cover your topic of interest. If you call, email or tweet at a reporter, keep your pitch short and to the point. Before sending a letter to the editor, an op-ed or press release, review their guidelines online for length and formatting requirements.
- Include your name, the organization you're working with or writing on behalf of such as FCCLA or a teen coalition, and your contact information (home address, telephone number, email and social media).
- Be concise, specific, timely, and relevant. Letters should be no longer than 300 words, op-eds no more than 500-700 words and press releases 1 page max. Focus on one or two points only and explain how they directly impact the community today.
- Give readers a reason to care. Research findings and statistics are important for making your case, but use them sparingly and avoid jargon. Sharing your teen driving experiences will help reporters and their readers, viewers or listeners feel a connection with you and the issue.



## Sample Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor:

I'm a teen who, contrary to what is being reported in the news, doesn't text while driving, always wears a seat belt and refrains from drinking and driving.

Many teens like me recognize the awesome responsibility that comes with getting a driver's license. That's why my Family, Career and Community Leaders Chapter (FCCLA) at \_\_\_\_\_ High School is partnering with the Foundation for Advancing Alcohol Responsibility (FAAR) to speak out about teen driver safety. We're working to ensure that our classmates and friends recognize the risks associated with driving and make safety their top priority whether they're behind the wheel or in the passenger seat.

Our efforts are paying off. Car crashes involving teens are down nationwide and in \_\_\_\_\_ (state) and fewer lives are being lost. But the fact that car crashes remain the leading cause of death for my age group means that our job is far from done. Mile for mile, teens are involved in three times as many fatal crashes as all other drivers. However, many times it isn't teen drivers who are killed in these crashes, but their passengers, occupants of other vehicles or pedestrians.

That's why I'm encouraging everyone in our community to join with my FCCLA Chapter and get educated about teen driver safety. The **IKnowEverything** teen driving resource ([www.iknoweverything.com](http://www.iknoweverything.com)) developed by FAAR is a good way to start. It includes research-based facts, core safe driving messages and tips to help new drivers be safe. Take the time to review it and then share what you learned with your family, friends and co-workers.

Working together we can help prevent teen crashes and make the road safer for everyone.

Your Name  
Town



## Sample Op-Ed

I'm a teen and while I may think I know everything, I know that when it comes to driving, I still have a lot to learn. In fact, I recently learned that practice and lots of it over an extended period of time is the only way to become a good and safe driver.

That's why I'm committed to working with my friends and classmates to make sure they understand the awesome responsibility that comes with getting a driver's license. Yes, it means freedom and independence, but it's not without risk. Mile for mile, teens are involved in three times as many fatal crashes as all other drivers. And while crashes involving teens in \_\_\_\_\_ (state) and nationwide are down, car crashes are the number one killer of my age group.

This and other research-based facts are detailed in the teen driver resource, **IKnowEverything**, developed by the Foundation for Advancing Alcohol Responsibility (FAAR). Teens just like in \_\_\_\_\_ (town) and local communities across the nation are leveraging this tool to learn what we can do protect ourselves whether we're behind the wheel or in the passenger seat. From paying attention 100% of the time, always buckling up and not drinking and driving, to letting our parents know our plans and whom we're driving with, following these tips will help reduce our crash risk.

I've also learned that when teens crash, it's often our passengers, people in other vehicles or pedestrians who are seriously injured or killed. That's why I'm asking everyone in our community to get educated about teen driving. Go to [www.iknoweverything.com](http://www.iknoweverything.com), review the information and share what you learn with your family, friends and co-workers. While it's important that parents partner with their teen drivers by establishing and enforcing rules, being good role models and continuing to drive with them after they're licensed, everyone has a role to play in helping to keeping us safe.

Working together, we can help prevent teen crashes and make the road safer for everyone.

Your Name  
Town



## Sample News Release

For Immediate Release

Contact: (Your Name)  
Telephone #/Email Address

\_\_\_\_\_ (Town) Teens Calling on the Community to Get Educated About Teen Driver Safety

(Town) (Date) – Last year \_\_\_\_\_ (#) teens were involved in car crashes in \_\_\_\_\_ (state). That number is unacceptable to the members of the Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) Chapter at \_\_\_\_\_ High School, who are urging all community members to learn about the issue.

The FCCLA Chapter, which is made up of students in grades 9-12, is partnering with the Foundation for Advancing Alcohol Responsibility (FAAR) to speak about teen driver safety through school and community events. (Reference specific activities your chapter is doing or is planning such as hosting a teen driver safety night or a school assembly using the **IKnowEverything** resources.) The Chapter members are leveraging FAAR's **IKnowEverything** teen driver resource to educate their classmates and friends about the risks associated with driving. The web-based tool is filled with research-based facts, core safe driving messages and tips to help new drivers be safe.

“Getting a license means freedom and independence, but it also comes with tremendous responsibility,” said FCCLA Chapter member \_\_\_\_\_ (name). “We want our peers to recognize that when they text, ride with too many friends, speed, drink and drive, or engage in other unsafe behaviors when driving, they’re putting themselves, their passengers and everyone on the road in danger.”

Since teen drivers impact all roadway users, the FCCLA Chapter is urging everyone in the community to get involved. “This isn’t just a teen or parent issue,” stressed \_\_\_\_\_ (name). “When teens crash, it’s often their passengers, people in other vehicles or pedestrians who are seriously injured or killed. We need the entire community to get educated and share what they learn with family, friends and co-workers.”

“Efforts like this are paying off,” \_\_\_\_\_ (name) added. “Car crashes involving teens are trending downward nationwide and in \_\_\_\_\_ (state) and fewer lives are being lost. But car crashes are still the leading cause of death for teens with an average of seven losing their lives in our country every day.”

# ABOUT the programs

## The Foundation for Advancing Alcohol Responsibility

Formerly known as The Century Council, the **Foundation for Advancing Alcohol Responsibility (FAAR)**, is a national not-for-profit that leads the fight to eliminate drunk driving and underage drinking and is funded by the following distillers: Bacardi U.S.A., Inc.; Brown-Forman; Constellation Brands, Inc.; DIAGEO, Hood River Distillers, Inc.; and Pernod Ricard USA. For more than 23 years, FAAR has transformed countless lives through programs that bring individuals, families and communities together to guide a lifetime of conversations around alcohol responsibility. To learn more, please visit us at [www.responsibility.org](http://www.responsibility.org).

## IKnowEverything

**IKnowEverything** is an integrated teen driver safety program that highlights the issues of drunk driving and distracted driving, and reiterates that parents have the most influence on their teen’s driving behaviors. The program also reinforces that teens already “know everything” about how to be a safe driver and covers critical topics including drinking alcohol underage and driving, distracted driving, late night driving, speeding, number of passengers, and license restrictions. For more information, visit [www.iknoweverything.com](http://www.iknoweverything.com).

## Family, Career and Community Leaders of America

**Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA)**, is a dynamic and effective national student organization that helps young men and women become leaders and address important personal, family, work, and societal issues through Family and Consumer Sciences education. FCCLA has 200,000 members and more than 5,500 chapters from 49 state associations, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. The organization has involved more than ten million youth since its founding in 1945.

**FCCLA: The Ultimate Leadership Experience** is unique among youth organizations because its programs are planned and run by members. It is the only career and technical in-school student organization with the family as its central focus. Participation in national programs and chapter activities helps members become strong leaders in their families, careers, and communities. For more information, visit [www.fcclainc.org](http://www.fcclainc.org).

# Can I use Social Media to engage the press?

Yes! Reporters also monitor the Internet and use Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Vine, and other social media tools to filter online information and spot trends. Posting teen driver safety facts, statistics, events, articles, photos, and videos on social media is not only a good way to educate your friends and attract new followers, but also to get the media's attention. (Check out the teen driver safety Tweets and Facebook status updates from the **IKnowEverything** program for ideas.)

In addition to posting information, following reporters on Twitter and Facebook is a good way to learn what they're interested in and build relationships. When reporters post stories or Tweet about particular topics, they're seeking your input. Look for connections to teen driver safety and share links that will not only help them learn more about the issue, but showcase your advocacy efforts.

## Tips for Using Social Media

While you may be a social media pro, having a well-thought out plan will ensure that you get the most out of what you post! Just like a press release, your social media plan should answer who, what, when, where, why, and how. It should be:

- **Goal-oriented:** What do I want to accomplish and why?
- **Strategic:** What will I do to achieve my goal?
- **Targeted:** Who do I want to reach and how?
- **Time-sensitive:** When will I do this?
- **Tactical:** What will I say and where will I say it?

Your plan should also take into account potential obstacles (i.e., My FCCLA Chapter doesn't have a Facebook page.) and how you'll address them (i.e., My FCCLA Chapter can set one up.) (For help developing your social media plan, check out the **IKnowEverything** template.)



Check out teen driver safety Tweets and Facebook status updates at [IKnowEverything.com](http://IKnowEverything.com)



Learn more at

[IKnowEverything.com](http://IKnowEverything.com)

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