



## FAMILIES FOR SAFE STREETS MANUAL



“I cannot overstate it: Families for Safe Streets ...are among the most powerful advocacy forces I've ever seen in politics... If we want our streets to be safer, you really need the human beings who've lost loved ones. It reframes everything.”

”

*-Polly Trottenberg, then-Commissioner of the  
NYC Department of Transportation*

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# 1. WELCOME

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This detailed guide is designed for people who have been personally impacted by traffic violence who want to become an FSS member, an “ambassador”, or join with others to form a chapter of Families for Safe Streets.

This guide is also meant to support partnering organizations who are sponsoring or interested in co-founding an FSS chapter in their community, as all of our chapters are embedded within local organizations.

After using this guide, you will know the following:

- Our mission and core values
- Our philosophy for making change
- How to become a member, an ambassador, or start an official chapter
- The basics of running a chapter
- How to use our many toolkits to make streets safe

## INTRODUCTION

Since our founding in 2014 in New York City, people across the country have reached out to Families for Safe Streets (FSS) asking for assistance with getting involved in safe streets advocacy, or forming an FSS chapter in their communities. We have created this guide to offer help with that process, building upon our decade of experience in New York City and from the successes and challenges of the chapters across the country.

*Our theory of change is simple:* FSS stories + compelling data + an energized advocate base can change the way safe streets issues are addressed in towns and cities across the country. We have seen it happen time and again and have developed a model to win change.

The FSS manual is intended for individuals and family members affected by traffic violence, as well as staff at the partner organization as an FSS chapter gets off the ground. Rather than starting new organizations, we require FSS chapters to form within an existing, street safety, public health, or transportation advocacy organization. Local organizations fighting for safe streets have much to gain from the moral authority FSS members bring to the issues. By creating an FSS chapter, an advocacy organization may be able to move its advocacy forward in ways that were not previously possible (see [“The Power of Partnerships”](#) for details).

This manual provides information on how an FSS member or chapter can elevate a local advocacy organization’s efforts, details the FSS model, provides guidance on how to reach out to people who have been personally impacted, gives step-by-step advice on launching and operating your chapter, explains how to identify and implement an advocacy campaign, and shares information on how to best support those who have been affected by traffic violence.

We continuously update the manual so please share suggestions and resources if there's anything we missed.

“

Families for Safe Streets embodies the recovery process and shows that, no matter what, life goes on. FSS provides a window of hope for those who are suffering and can provide a type of support that is unlike any other. FSS shows how people can take their pain, turn it to advocacy and try to make the world a better place while they lean on one another and learn how to thrive.

”

*-Deb Travis, Trauma Program Manager, Mount Sinai St. Luke's Hospital, New York City*

## 2. MISSION, VISION & CORE VALUES

### MISSION

Families for Safe Streets confronts the preventable epidemic of traffic violence by advocating for life-saving changes and providing support to those who have been affected by this crisis. Our victim/survivor-led movement fights to reduce to zero the number of people killed or seriously injured in traffic crashes across the United States.

### VISION

We envision a country where all road users – including those walking, biking, rolling, and in vehicles – safely co-exist and where children and adults can travel freely without risk of harm. We fight for a future where no loss of life in traffic crashes is tolerated. In order to make this vision a reality, we intentionally seek to grow our movement so that we can effectively demand legislative and policy change from our local, state, and federal leaders. Until this preventable crisis ends, we seek to create a warm and welcoming community that provides mutual support so that no one suffers alone.

## CORE VALUES

FSS' core values inform all of our advocacy efforts:

***Commitment to Data-Driven Goals & Systemic Change:*** Although the circumstances that caused the crash that impacted our members may differ, we commit to work together on issues that are proven to be the most effective at saving lives and reducing serious injuries due to traffic violence. We use a data-driven approach and focus on the “upstream” policy solutions that will have the greatest influence and achieve Vision Zero. Our campaigns are grounded in advocating for the Safe System approach: safe speeds, safe roads, safe vehicles, protecting vulnerable road users, and supporting victims of crashes.

***Bold & Strategic Organizing Tactics:*** Our efforts are most effective when we engage in strategic tactics and are unafraid to be bold because we have the moral authority to confront the complacency about traffic violence. We seek not only to make change “inside” the system through meetings with elected officials, government agency leadership, other advocacy groups, and community partners, but also by pushing from the “outside” through press conferences, rallies, public forums, and even direct action (e.g., civil disobedience, boycotts). We prepare a detailed campaign plan when pressing for change and seek guidance from campaign experts, including FSS-National.

***Consistent Messaging:*** We recognize that while all of our stories are unique and provide the power to make change, we must deliver a consistent message if we want to be successful in our advocacy efforts. FSS-National as well as the sponsoring organization and chapter's leadership will create tools and provide resources so that all members can respond effectively to the media, elected officials, and others.

***Inclusivity:*** We strive to represent the full scale and breadth of this crisis and recognize that low-income individuals, people of color, children and seniors are disproportionately impacted by traffic violence. We work hard to ensure that individuals from all racial, ethnic, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds as well as people of all ages and abilities are involved. We also believe it is important that people who lost loved ones as well as those who were injured are represented.

***Collaboration:*** We seek out mutually beneficial partnerships with other aligned organizations and community-based groups to support us in this fight. While we know we have the moral authority to demand change, we also understand that we need others to stand with us if we are to be successful.

***Clear & Effective Decision-Making:*** We acknowledge that as volunteers, we need formal decision-making and organizational structures for FSS chapters. The exact nature of this leadership structure may depend on the specific circumstances of each chapter. Regardless of the exact nature of the local decision-making process, we seek to have input from members as broadly as possible while still maintaining an effective decision-making process.

***Compassion & Understanding:*** We recognize that everyone comes to FSS as a result of traumatic loss or injury. We commit to support one another and understand that we all bring to this work a mix of anger, sadness, and an ability to participate that may ebb and flow as we travel along our grief journey. We all strive to treat one another with respect, listen attentively, and work to overcome any differences that may arise. We recognize that all loss and injury is traumatic; none is more “worthy” of involvement than another.

***Determination:*** When our actions are not successful, we refocus our energies so that we achieve maximum effectiveness. Once we finally win, we take pride in and celebrate our collective victories.

“

Viktor Frankl wrote in, *Man's Search for Meaning*, that meaning came from three possible sources: purposeful work, love, and courage in the face of difficulty. And whenever I think about the man I was married to for thirty-three years – Carl Henry Nacht, better known to family as “Henry,” I am immensely grateful to have shared my life with someone who embodied Frankl's three. Henry was a beloved physician committed to patient care, an athlete who held a record for running twenty-six consecutive New York City marathons (mostly under three hours), a husband/ father who loved our children and me passionately, a coach of soccer and basketball and baseball, and a person who faced many difficult times in his life with courage. Life was cherished and deeply meaningful to Henry. On a warm summer night, that man, whom I celebrated, and who knew me better than anyone, was riding his bike next to mine when he was hit by a reckless tow truck driver. He died three days later from his profound injuries.

In the days and weeks that followed my husband's death, when I could not focus, could barely breathe, I reached for poetry. There I found the broken shards of my heart in poets like Marie Howe, Donald Hall, and W.H. Auden. Nothing spoke to me so clearly as Auden's poem, *Funeral Blues*. Particularly this stanza, which I read at his memorial:

He was my North, my South, my East and West,  
My working week and my Sunday rest,  
My noon, my midnight, my talk, my song;  
I thought that love would last forever: I was wrong

Grief too can seem as though it will last forever, but as the Buddhists know and remind us, everything in this life is temporal; even grief, will eventually move. Poetry and to be in nature soothed me, and soon I reached for a pen. Composing on the page took on more meaning than it had before my loss, and slowly it became a crucial part of my life. It followed too, that writing was one way to be an activist raising awareness about the terrible price and injustice of traffic violence. And in joining my voice to that of Transportation Alternatives twelve years ago, and years later with Families for Safe Streets, I turned my anger and grief into successful advocacy and activism for a more livable safe city; turning forbidding streets into forgiving ones. Nothing since Henry's death has given my own life – already a full one – more meaning than this work in a great metropolis, where it is possible to make a difference.

”

**MARY BETH KELLY**  
**WIFE OF CARL "HENRY" NACHT**



## 3. WHY FAMILIES FOR SAFE STREETS?

### THE PROBLEM

Each year over a million people are killed on roadways around the world. More than half of those killed are the most vulnerable — they were walking, bicycling, or riding a motorcycle.

Traffic violence is a crisis in the United States: it is one of the top causes of death for people of all ages, and a leading cause of death for children and adolescents. These numbers rival other preventable public health crises like gun violence and the opioid crisis. After decades of a decline in the number of people killed in crashes, the trend has taken an alarming turn with significant increases or stagnation in change – despite the dramatic improvements in most other high-income nations. Year after year, the United States routinely ranks as one of the most dangerous compared to our peer nations.

**Every day, approximately 120 people are killed on US roadways, and many thousands suffer life-altering injuries.**<sup>1</sup> The numbers are horrific, and every crash leaves multiple family members and friends affected and, in many cases, traumatized.

### THE PROVEN SOLUTION

We know that political systems and long entrenched policies rarely change on their own – they must be acted upon from the outside. Creating an FSS chapter or becoming an FSS Ambassador is an essential way to address the preventable problem of traffic violence, because FSS chapters and ambassadors – by channeling grief into action – are able to drive political and social attention to the epidemic of traffic violence and compel decision-makers to make better choices.

Our political leaders at every level of government must put in place the proven, data-driven solutions to save lives and eliminate traffic deaths. Cities in the US and countries abroad have implemented legislative and policy changes that have achieved tremendous reductions in roadway deaths and serious injuries, and in some cases, totally eliminated them. These data-driven solutions that we demand our leaders to implement follow a “Safe System” approach to fighting traffic violence that promotes:

- *Safe Streets*: Designing roadways to manage speed with road diets, safe intersection design, roundabouts, rumble strips, bike lanes, wider sidewalks, better lighting and more.
- *Safe Speeds*: Set safe speed limits, particularly in areas where people are walking and biking.

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<sup>1</sup> For the most recent statistics on the number of people killed and injured in the United States: <https://injuryfacts.nsc.org/international/motor-vehicle-deaths-in-the-u-s-compared-to-the-world/>. Data on the U.S. comparison to other countries in terms of per capita traffic fatalities: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/road-traffic-injuries>



- *Safe Vehicles:* Design vehicles to anticipate and prevent crashes and lessen the impact when crashes occur through reduced weight, improved visibility, safety technology, and other vehicle design solutions.
- *Supporting Victims:* Provide post-crash care to better support crash victims.
- *Protecting Vulnerable Road Users:* Prioritize those most vulnerable when making legislative and policy changes because protecting those outside the vehicle ensures that all street users are protected – including those driving and passengers inside the vehicle.

Everyone deserves to travel safely in their communities.

## 4. FSS MODEL & “THEORY OF CHANGE”

Our national organizational model creates multiple pathways to elevate the voices of those personally impacted by traffic violence and builds on the foundational elements in our [theory of change](#) that are critical to our success: the Power of Partnerships, Stories, and Grassroots Advocacy. We have learned that providing direct support, developing a unified vision and movement, and engaging in joint projects is critical to the success of our work.

### FSS ORGANIZATIONAL MODEL

There are three different ways for those who have been personally impacted by traffic violence to get involved with FSS. The path that’s right for you depends on a number of factors including: your geographic proximity to other members, your desire to join your voice with the FSS movement, your success in identifying a partner organization who will support your efforts with staff, and your ability to fundraise. The most important thing for potential members is that **no matter who you are, or where you are, there is a place for you within this community.**



The **three pathways** that crash victims/survivors/family members can get involved are as follows:

- *Members:* Anyone who has been directly impacted by traffic violence can be an FSS member after taking a few simple steps. All members are able to participate in our [online community](#), our virtual support groups, peer mentoring programs, and other trainings.
- *Ambassadors:* An FSS “Ambassador” is a member who is authorized to speak to the media, meet with elected officials, or otherwise engage in advocacy efforts as a representative of Families for Safe Streets in a geographic area not covered by the boundaries of an FSS chapter. Ambassadors may also serve as peer mentors to provide

emotional support to other FSS members if they undergo the peer mentor training program.

- **Chapters:** Chapters are formed when FSS members/ambassadors join in partnership with a designated community organization, and convene FSS members in a manner consistent with the **Chapter Rubric** described in the [Getting Involved](#) section below.

While not every ambassador needs to be building toward identifying a sponsoring organization to create a chapter, the national movement will be most successful when that is the goal.



## OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

Our theory of change is based on three key tenets – partnership, collective stories, and grass-roots organizing – and we have found that these three critical components are key to successfully fighting for change.

### *The Power of Partnerships for FSS Chapters*

In order for an FSS chapter to be most effective, crash victims/survivors need to partner with a strong, committed advocacy organization that will provide staff support, financial assistance, and advocacy strategy guidance. Our founding work in New York City was only successful because of our strong partnership with Transportation Alternatives (TA) and the chapters that have had the most success have replicated this strong partnership. Having a sponsoring organization that believes in and invests in the work is critical.

Before being personally affected by traffic violence, few FSS members have engaged in advocacy and many are unfamiliar with the problems and solutions to achieve safe streets. The sponsoring organization is expected to share with the FSS' chapter its comprehensive collective knowledge of transportation issues and history, street safety, community organizing, and the how-to of working with legislators and community leaders at the city and/or state level.

FSS chapters can help the partner organization accomplish change that seemed impossible, and can also help expand its base of support. FSS members can also help expand the sponsor's reach by tapping new organizations who may want to partner with you on this work.

A true partnership requires that the chapter operate the same as other organizational programs.

### *The Power of Our Collective Stories*

FSS members bring a human face to statistics that otherwise may seem meaningless, and can give government agencies the backing they need to resist the inevitable pushback against street safety efforts. Narrative helps humans make sense of the world as observed in

["The Power of Narrative:"](#)

*"Narratives provide the context in which the facts we observe can be interpreted, understood, and acted upon. In that sense, they equate to much more than the stories we tell, write, or illustrate figuratively; they end up being the truths, or the ideas we accept as truths, that underpin the perceptions that shape our "realities" and in the process form our cultures and societies. Through narratives, we explain how we see things, how these things work, how we make decisions and justify them . . ."*

But the key to elevating FSS' member personal stories is organizing the *collective voices* of those that have been most negatively impacted by our failed policy status quo because it has great power for two key reasons:

- Individual voices often do not break through, but a collection of personal stories shows the scale of the problem
- Having multiple volunteers ready to speak out ensures you always have someone to push back when there is opposition

Telling the stories of family members killed in crashes, or those who have suffered life-altering injuries, helps sweep aside the opposition and harness the political will of legislators previously reluctant to take a stand. It is hard to say no to those who have paid the highest price for society's failure to put in place the proven solutions to save lives. FSS members bring the moral authority to bear and our **collective stories shows that this is not just an individual problem.**

The second reason that a *constellation* of voices is more powerful than an individual speaking out is because the work of FSS is very hard: it is exhausting both physically and emotionally. Building a community means that FSS members inspire and support one other and share

strength. That also means that when a person needs to step back – and most do — there is someone else ready to step up.

### *The Power of Grassroots Advocacy*

FSS voices are most effective when they amplify the strong grassroots advocacy efforts of local organizations using targeted, strategic, multi-faceted techniques.

We recommend using an organizing model based on or similar to that of the Midwest Academy that requires that you set short, medium and long-term goals, and then plan around them.

- For each goal, we recommend that you identify the change needed, the political target, any secondary targets, and what tactics are needed to move the targets.
- When planning, it is important to consider the organizational resources needed, the ways the campaign will change the organization, and the internal problems the campaign needs to consider.
- Then identify constituents and allies and approach them; try to anticipate opponents and their tactics.

Our joint efforts can shame politicians and journalists into paying heed, which can magnify an advocacy organization's efforts and possibly help ensure breakthroughs on issues that may have stymied you for years. For more detailed information on planning and executing a grass-roots advocacy campaign see Chapter 8.

The FSS approach combining our collective voices, partnerships with experts, and grassroots advocacy is working, and the changes we have helped enact save lives. In an interview Polly Trottenberg, the Commissioner of the NYC Department of Transportation at the time, said:

*“I cannot overstate it: Families for Safe Streets ...are among the most powerful advocacy forces I've ever seen in politics... If we want our streets to be safer, you really need the human beings who've lost loved ones. It reframes everything.”*

*– Polly Trottenberg*

“

My son, Asif Rahman, was a vibrant, talented young man. He was a poet, a rapper, an artist, a loving friend to many and a loving brother and son. He was full of life and loved to do beat-boxing.

He recorded many songs and was planning to release his music CD on his birthday. There are many videos of Asif's various performances and a documentary on him which can be viewed on YouTube under the name "metaphysical lyrical wizard" and/or "asifalicious".

He also was a college student where he was studying to become a music teacher. Just days before he was killed, Asif was hired as a para-professional at a nearby public elementary school. But on his way home from his new job, he was hit and killed on known dangerous street by a reckless truck driver. The driver hit his bicycle from behind and then drove his truck over him, killing him instantly. All his organs were crushed. The truck driver not only crushed his organs, he crushed all his dreams and hopes.

After this tragic loss, our house became as silent as a grave. There's no laughter, no sound of beatboxing, no calling out loud, 'Hi Mom'. His voice was stopped forever. The truck driver just didn't kill Asif, he killed all of us as well. It's a pain which kills you like a slow poison. It hurts me that I will not see him graduate from college, get married, or have a family like most of his friends. The truck driver didn't only crush Asif's hopes and dreams for his future, he crushed my hopes and dreams as well.

Since Asif died, I made it my mission to make our streets safer, and this is what has kept me going. I found a new meaning of survival by saving lives of others. I do not want any other mother going through the pain of losing a child. I want our leaders not to think of numbers when it comes to a fatality. I want you to think of a person, think about their loving families, think how these deaths impacted their families and communities. Think that today it may be someone else's child or spouse or sibling, in the future it could be your family member or someone from your community.

”

**LIZI RAHMAN**

**MOTHER OF ASIF RAHMAN**



## 5. GETTING INVOLVED: THE PROCESS

There are three ways those personally impacted by traffic violence can be engaged in the Families for Safe Streets national movement:

- FSS Member
- FSS Ambassador
- FSS Chapter (in partnership with a sponsoring organization)

Below are the required steps for each of these three options, and expectations on what you will receive from FSS-National.



### FSS MEMBER

Anyone who has been directly impacted by traffic violence can be an FSS member after taking a few simple steps. All members are able to participate in our online community, our virtual support groups, peer mentoring programs, and other trainings.

#### *Process*

1. **INITIAL MEETING:** Have an initial conversation with an FSS staff member from the national office and/or the local chapter to learn more about FSS, our support services and training opportunities. (Note that this conversation can happen in many ways as we recognize that crash victims/survivors are grieving and we want to be responsive to their needs. The FSS staff may reach out once a prospective member contacts us by phone, email or completes an online membership form. Or a family member, friend or local leader may share the contact information with consent from the family.)

2. *MEMBERSHIP FORM*: Complete an [FSS online membership form](#) or share the information during your initial meeting.
3. *ONLINE COMMUNITY*: FSS members are encouraged to join our [online community](#). Much of our communication happens there including information about support events and advocacy opportunities. The online community is a key way to get feedback, information, and most of all, support, in real time. Members can engage as much, or as little, as they want.
4. *ONGOING OPPORTUNITIES*: FSS members are eligible to participate in FSS skill trainings, [emotional support services](#), and [FSS-National Governance](#) committees.

### *FSS-National to Provide*

- FSS support services include: monthly virtual support groups, special support events, quarterly peer mentor trainings, and matching members with peer mentors (trained FSS members who have been through similar experiences and are dedicated to helping others survive these life-altering tragedies) for short-term or ongoing support.
- Training in key areas including advocacy, media skills, outreach tactics, and peer support.
- Opportunity to participate in FSS-National Governance process.

## **FSS AMBASSADOR**

Ambassadors enable FSS to build a presence in a community where there is no chapter, and inform the wider community of our mission. We strongly encourage FSS Ambassadors to engage with local news reporters and media. The media plays a major role in informing the wider community of our mission. One of the key ways Ambassadors can make change, particularly in the absence of a larger chapter, is to be prepared to engage the media.

### *Process*

1. *MEMBERSHIP & APPLICATION*: Individuals must first become an FSS member and then contact a staff member (by phone or email at [info@familiesforsafestreeets.org](mailto:info@familiesforsafestreeets.org)) to indicate interest in fighting for safe streets and becoming an Ambassador. Once the application is approved, pertinent materials will be sent via email for the next phase.
2. *UNDERSTAND THE ISSUE OF TRAFFIC VIOLENCE*: Families for Safe Streets requires that all Ambassadors understand the problems and issues involved with traffic violence.
  - All are required to participate in our Ambassador training series to gain an understanding of safe streets issues so they can be a knowledgeable spokesperson for Families for Safe Streets. Trainings are offered throughout the year.

- The Ambassador training includes a specific section for speaking to the media. One of the key ways Ambassadors can create change, particularly in the absence of a larger chapter, is to be prepared to engage the media (local television, newspapers, and/or radio stations). FSS staff members work with Ambassadors to be sure they are supported and prepared to engage through a variety of channels including opinion pieces, letters to the editor, press releases, and news interviews.
3. *AMBASSADOR AGREEMENT*: After verification that the review has been completed, applicants must complete the Ambassador Agreement between themselves and FSS-National.
  4. *APPROVAL*: Upon approval, an email will be sent to the applicant letting them know they are now an official FSS Ambassador and can be an official spokesperson for Families for Safe Streets and sharing next steps.
  5. *ONLINE COMMUNITY*: FSS Ambassadors are required to join our [online community](#). Much of our communication happens there including information about support events and advocacy opportunities. Ambassadors can engage as much, or as little, as they want.
  6. *ONGOING OPPORTUNITIES*: FSS Ambassadors eligible to participate in FSS quarterly Ambassador meetings, ongoing trainings, [support services](#), and [FSS-National Governance](#) committees.
  7. *ONGOING REQUIREMENTS*: The position of Ambassador cannot be reassigned to another individual, though Ambassadors are encouraged to identify others to apply, complete the training and become FSS Ambassadors. FSS-National may terminate the FSS Ambassador Agreement with written notice.

#### *FSS-National to Provide*

- Relevant training, personal guidance, toolkits, resources and guidance so that all Ambassadors are proficient in the issues that lead to traffic violence and proven solutions to prevent it.
- An understanding of the role of FSS and our mission, vision and core values.
- Regular communication with Ambassadors for the purpose of planning and supporting their involvement with FSS.
- Fundraising opportunities to assist with securing resources to support local work.
- Notification about national events and conferences including any scholarships available earmarked for FSS Ambassadors.
- In the event that FSS-National has funds, Ambassadors will be notified and helped to submit requests for funding specific project costs.



- Guidance on how to recruit other members and explore potential sponsoring organizations with whom to partner in order to pursue starting an FSS chapter.
- Signed Ambassador Agreement.

## FSS CHAPTER

The most effective way to make change at the local and state level is to create an FSS chapter because it leverages the three key tenets in the FSS Theory of Change: [Partnerships](#), [Collective Stories](#), and [Grassroots Advocacy](#).

In order to apply for chapter status the following *Chapter Rubric* must below must be met. In extenuating circumstances, exceptions may be made and will be determined on a case-by-case basis after discussion with the FSS National Director and in consultation with the Executive Committee.

1. **SUFFICIENT MEMBERS:** Have a membership of 10 active local FSS members and/or Ambassadors, preferably 1-2 of whom have been FSS Ambassadors for at least one year and are willing to serve as the chapter co-leads.
2. **NON-PROFIT SPONSOR:** A local 501(c)3 non-profit organization agrees to sponsor the chapter whose mission includes one or more of the following:
  - a. Encourages better transportation options, safe streets, or environmental/public health initiatives.
  - b. Supports grassroots, member-led advocacy.
  - c. Increases awareness of the issues it addresses broadly or specifically.
  - d. Promotes social justice and/or economic fairness.
  - e. Reinforces a connection to the community's identity and/or sense of place while fostering ecological values.
  - f. Educates the public about sustainability and/or engages in advocacy on sustainability.
3. **STAFF COMMITMENT & INITIAL FUNDING REQUIREMENT:** The sponsoring organization must commit to dedicating an existing staff member(s) time to supporting the FSS chapter at some level. While we don't mandate a specific percentage of staff time, FSS-National strongly recommends that this be a .5 FTE at chapter launch and, or within two years of the start of new chapters. It cannot be overstated how important staff support is for realizing the potential impact of an FSS chapter. The actual amount of time to be dedicated will be decided on a case-by-case basis, with feedback from the National Executive Committee. Key staff responsibilities are outlined below. In addition, sponsoring organizations must allocate funds to purchase FSS branded materials (e.g., t-shirts, pins, crash signs, and other specified materials) from FSS-National "at cost" (approximately \$250/order depending on the size of your chapter).

4. *INTEGRATION OF FSS INTO THE SPONSORING ORGANIZATION*: The sponsoring organization commits to integrate the chapter's advocacy activities into the work it is already undertaking, provide ongoing programmatic and fiscal support to the chapter as it would other organizational programs, and invite an FSS member onto their board of directors. The sponsoring organization also provides a mechanism for its FSS members to help fundraise for the chapter and their joint efforts on its website.
5. *TRAINING*: The identified staff member and preferably their supervisor and/or senior organizational lead as well as the FSS chapter lead(s) commit to participating in the initial chapter "cohort model" training program and completing all required assignments (described below) as well as all mandatory ongoing training. In addition, the FSS chapter lead(s) are required to attend the 2-hour FSS Peer Mentor training to build communication and outreach skills.
6. *COMMUNICATIONS*: Sponsoring organization agrees to serve as the internal and external communications hub for the chapter by prominently displaying information on the chapter to its website or creating a designated website, and setting up social media accounts (using the suggested naming rubric from FSS-National). In addition, partner organization lead staff and chapter leads are required to join our online community, as much of our communication happens there including information about support events and advocacy opportunities. Chapters are also required to encourage use of our online community by its chapter members.
7. *ONGOING COLLABORATION WITH FSS-NATIONAL*: Commitment from the sponsoring organization to:
  - a. Work with FSS-National on an annual plan to facilitate growth of the chapter and identify chapter priorities and goals.
  - b. Meet with FSS-National at least twice per year to review chapter development.
  - c. Participate in a national fundraiser at least once a year, contributing 25% of proceeds to FSS-National and dedicated the remaining 75% to chapter needs.
  - d. Oversee completion of FSS membership forms so that these are completed and submitted to FSS-National in a timely manner.
  - e. Facilitate placement of members' stories on the FSS-National web-based storymap.
  - f. Adhere to compliance requirements to maintain FSS chapter status.
  - g. Encourage participation in the FSS-National Governance structure.
8. *OTHER ONGOING OPPORTUNITIES*: All chapter members are eligible to participate in FSS ongoing trainings, [support services](#), and [FSS-National Governance](#) committees.

### *Process*

1. *CONSULTATION*: The proposed chapter leads and sponsoring organization representatives will meet with FSS-National staff to discuss becoming a chapter and

review its ability to meet the chapter rubric requirements, including sufficient knowledge and understanding of traffic violence issues and promoting the integrity of FSS.

2. APPLICATION: The sponsoring organization and chapter leads will complete an application form demonstrating their ability to meet the chapter rubric requirements and provide all information needed for the Memorandum of Understanding to be completed. The FSS Executive Committee will review the suitability of the application, and submit a recommendation to the FSS Director.
3. CHAPTER CONTRACT: When the new FSS chapter and sponsoring organization have come to an agreement, the sponsoring organization's leadership will sign the required [Memorandum of Understanding](#) ("MOU") with Transportation Alternatives, FSS' parent organization. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) sets out roles for TA, FSS-National, and the local sponsoring organization.
4. TRAINING: The chapter leaders and sponsoring organization staff will participate in the initial training program as well as ongoing training.
5. PEER MENTORING PROGRAM: The chapter will identify one member who is willing to serve as a peer mentor to others from their chapter or other members from across the country.

#### *FSS-National to Provide*

- An initial training program for all new chapters using a cohort model that meets 1-2 times/month for six months and will address outreach, communication, fundraising, member support on the local level, coalition building, and advocacy. There will be specific assignments and material will be reviewed together to help launch and effectively implement the chapter's first advocacy campaign.
- Ongoing updates, training workshops (e.g., story telling, media training, advocacy, trauma-informed outreach and engagement, etc.), tools, and individual guidance with the chapter for the purpose of planning and monitoring its involvement with FSS-National.
- Support services to all members including an initial "intake" meeting, virtual support groups, and peer mentoring program.
- Semi-annual meetings to review chapter development and set/review the chapter's annual plan.
- Meetings with FSS chapter at least twice per year to review chapter implementation, strategize on how to address challenges, and provide support/guidance.
- Provide FSS-branded materials including t-shirts, pins, and crash signs (at cost or free of charge if FSS-National receives funding).
- Provide a communications hub, include chapter information on the FSS-National website, and facilitate a "storymap" of members stories from across the country (described below).
- Ongoing advocacy strategy guidance and sample/model local advocacy campaigns.

- Support local efforts to mark World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims held on the 3rd Sunday of November every year.
- Fundraising opportunities to help raise funds for your local chapter as well as support FSS-National activities.
- Support and guidance to help chapters have a voice on the national stage; to align and engage with regional and national policy.
- A designated forum in our online community hub for internal chapter communications and access to all chapters members to the online community.
- Promulgate compliance requirements every one to two years, with input from chapters nationwide to strengthen the movement. All compliance requirements will be finalized by the FSS Executive Committee.

*Key Staff Responsibilities (Staff from sponsoring organization supporting the chapter)*

- 1. Help recruit and engage members with support and guidance from FSS-National.**
  - a. Conduct outreach sessions and share FSS materials with local hospitals, attorneys, etc.
  - b. Contact new members referred by the National office and/or local referral sources
- 2. Help organize and facilitate FSS meetings**
  - a. Schedule, promote, and facilitate all FSS meetings – guiding FSS members with the level of support required for a particular chapter
  - b. Create agenda with input from FSS member leadership or guide leadership in having them set the agenda
  - c. Share updates on sponsoring organization’s advocacy efforts and how local members can get involved
- 3. Guide strategic planning for selection of advocacy priorities**
  - a. Spearhead process, ideally annually, to help identify local campaign(s) where FSS voices will be most impactful
  - b. Identify at least one priority campaign for the chapter
- 4. Help spreadhead advocacy campaign(s) identified in the strategic planning process that FSS voices can elevate**
  - a. Plan a campaign strategy with input from FSS members as appropriate
  - b. Plan and schedule meetings with elected officials and invite FSS members to participate
  - c. Plan and organize rallies
  - d. Reach out to FSS members to support actions/events
  - e. Help prepare FSS members to be interviewed by the press, speak at a press conference, give public testimony, attend a lobby day, etc.
  - f. Provide support and resources so that FSS members can be effective advocates
- 5. Link FSS local members to FSS-National for support services or ensure FSS chapter leadership does so; connect for Federal advocacy as appropriate**
  - a. Ensure all members complete National membership form
  - b. Share information about National support services

- c. Facilitate introductions as appropriate
- d. When possible and appropriate, particularly for larger well-established chapters, identify FSS members who can participate in federal advocacy as appropriate

## FAQS

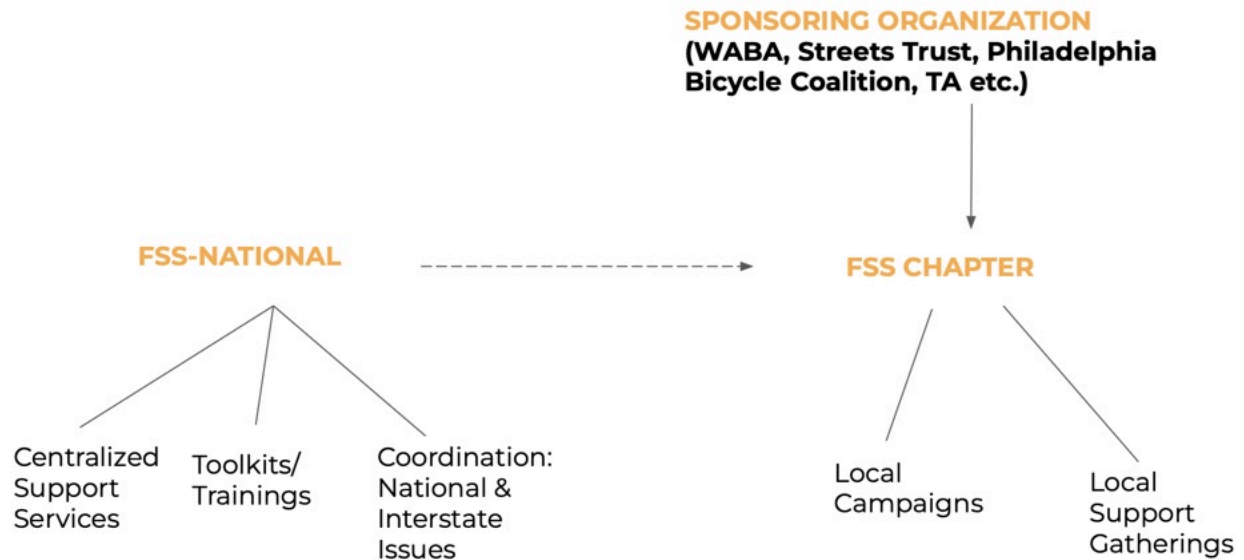
People often ask the following two questions so we want to answer them here:

*Why do chapter members have to be impacted directly by traffic violence?*

- **The strength of FSS voices comes from our members' lived experience.** FSS members can speak with first-hand knowledge of the trauma of traffic violence, can humanize the problem, and therefore can push more forcefully and with more credibility on the need for safe streets.
- Those who have been personally impacted by traffic violence offer a unique view that can complement the sponsoring organization's work, while not competing with the chapter's sponsoring organization for members. Many already engage supporters in their grassroots organization work.
- We do encourage the partnering organization to engage anyone interested in the fight for safe streets and will share our model so that you also can engage those not personally involved in the partner organization's grassroots organizing.
- We will not have a stringent litmus test on how people define being "impacted" – this can mean a family member who lost a loved one, a crash survivor, or anyone who feels a personal connection or loss from traffic violence. Chapter leadership will be entrusted to use their judgment.

*Will FSS-National micromanage our decisions on what legislative and policy changes we will fight for?*

- No. The goal is not to micromanage the advocacy campaigns local chapters will work on, but rather to provide a credible, national platform for safe streets campaigns. To that end, we need to ensure quality control on the campaigns associated with the FSS brand and that they adhere to our mission, values, and goals:
  - FSS-National will share guidelines on the broad *types* of campaigns FSS does and does not run.
  - When there is fuzziness on an idea, the FSS-National Executive Committee will serve as arbiters on the process to provide greater clarity.
  - We will also provide a range of support and services to enhance the likelihood of success in your local efforts (see chart below).



## FSS-NATIONAL GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

All decisions regarding the FSS model and organizational issues are made by the **FSS-National Executive Committee**, which will operate as follows:

- **Executive Committee**
  - *Number of Members:* Seven voting FSS members from chapters from across the country.
  - *Representative:* Four of the seven seats will be reserved for the four largest chapters. One seat will ideally be held by an Ambassador. There also will be an effort to ensure geographic diversity so that there is rural, suburban and urban representation.
  - *Non-Voting Members:* The Executive Committee allows up to three non-voting members who can be FSS ambassadors and/or representatives from a sponsoring organization.
  - *Process:* Applicants for Executive Committee membership are solicited annually for a two-year term.
  - *Term Limits:* There is a three-term limit for all members.
  - *By-Laws:* These requirements are laid out in the FSS-National By-Laws and may be amended by a majority vote of the current Executive Committee.

In addition, FSS individual members, ambassadors, and chapter members can get involved in FSS-National decision-making and activities through the following committees:

- **National Advocacy Committee:** Works to identify and organize federal level efforts as well as state-level model legislation.

- **Fundraising Committee:** Organizes FSS-National fundraising efforts as well as events that can help chapters raise funds.
- **National Support Committee:** Responsible for the design and oversight of FSS support services including our virtual support groups, peer mentoring program, and more.
- **National Growth and Recruitment Committee:** Coordinates efforts to promote FSS growth nationally, support chapter recruitment efforts, and identify/implement activities that will help those who have been personally impacted know that FSS exists.

Note that these committees will not replace the need for local governance and decision-making at the chapter level.



“

My family's life is divided into two parts - before and after October 8, 2013, when my son Sammy was struck by a reckless driver in front of our home.

Sammy was just two months shy of his thirteenth birthday.

A warm, loving, energetic, and bright child. He was full of life. He loved sports and played on a travel soccer team where he was the anchor of the defense. Only a few weeks before he was killed, Sammy rode a 100-mile century bike ride with my husband all around New York City. Sammy was comfortable in his own skin and put on no airs. He made friends easily and was kind. He hugged us every day, regularly said he loved us, frequently held hands while walking with us, and adored his 15-year-old sister.

Just days before he died, he wrote a beautiful short assignment for school about his name. In it, he spoke about the burden of leadership:

*"Sammy Cohen Eckstein...My name was chosen because it sounded like happiness, but that happiness put an invisible weight on my shoulders. The weight of leadership. I am Samuel, the one who God heard, Cohen, the one who (with my family and ancestors) lead a religion, Eckstein, the one cornerstone among thousands. The one corner that has to support everybody, while withstanding pain and sorrow...."*

Sammy was just weeks away from celebrating his Bar Mitzvah. It would perhaps have been the time when he publicly changed his name from Sammy to Sam with his friends and family.

**But he never had the opportunity to grow up.**

His death has rocked the very foundation of who we are and forever changed our lives. It is a struggle just to keep going without him.

It's been equally horrific to learn that his death is part of a much larger, preventable public health crisis. One that together we could end. **So please, for Sammy, be a leader as he was. Join with us and help end this unnecessary suffering.**

”

**AMY COHEN**

**MOTHER OF  
SAMMY COHEN ECKSTEIN**





## 6. TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICE

Supporting and engaging those who have been personally impacted in street safety work requires a trauma-informed approach – starting with the initial outreach and continuing with all advocacy and organizing efforts. The approach you take with each conversation, email, or other connection will be different than you may use engaging other volunteers.

Trauma is a psychological, emotional response to a deeply distressing or disturbing experience. The loss of a family member in a crash, or surviving a severe injury, is traumatic. The Connection Coalition describes [trauma-informed care](#) as practices that promote a culture of safety, empowerment, and healing. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration provides basic information about trauma [here](#).

It will be critical to undertake each conversation and activity with a trauma-informed lens. Grief and trauma will not look the same for everyone, and any one person's response to trauma may vary from day-to-day. Keep expectations realistic: a family member may be energized and able to work one day, and unable to get out of bed the next. Accept that they should do whatever they can when they can.

Bringing together people with various loss and injury experiences can also be challenging and requires a trauma-informed approach. For example, those who were injured often have survivors' guilt and may feel uncomfortable around those who have had a loss. And those who have lost parents, siblings, or spouses may feel they have not suffered as much as those whose children have died. When bringing together your members for meetings, it will be important to understand this and address it appropriately. Moreover, because many FSS members are in pain and angry—they are not at their best—this pain and anger will sometimes complicate efforts at comity and compromise.

Having organizational staff and chapter leaders who are trained by FSS-National to understand and implement trauma-informed practices will help chapter members and sponsoring organization partners connect with each other and effectively work together to advocate for change.

## 7. MEMBER OUTREACH

Whether you are an FSS Ambassador with a small local network, or a big chapter with 300 members, outreach is the way you strengthen your base of support and advocacy. FSS members may not always be up for advocacy work, and continuing to bring in new members who have experienced a loss or injury in a crash is so important.

Because FSS is a club no one wants to join, it is not easy to find new members for our difficult work. When reaching out to people who have been affected by a traffic crash, it's critical to

remember and be sensitive to the fact that they are traumatized and lean on the FSS-National office. Below is guidance on how to reach out to members. Please remember that the FSS-National office is here to help. We can conduct an initial meeting with all new members and connect them to our ongoing support services including our peer mentoring program, virtual support services, and more (see [Support Services](#) for details).



## TIPS AND TOOLS TO IDENTIFY POTENTIAL MEMBERS

There are a number of ways to reach out to new members (and make sure they can find you), and we advise pursuing them all. Because it is common for activity levels to fluctuate for members, it's wise to establish ongoing outreach. We should always be helping to raise up the next generation of leaders, because this is going to be a long fight.

Here are some tried and true strategies, and templates, examples, and references to support you:

- **CRASH SIGNS:** Post FSS signage at the crash site. The sooner you can do this after a serious crash, the more effective. Often, family members or neighbors will visit the site and if there is information available about FSS support services, we can be there for people when they need us most. FSS-National provides general and customized crash signs to all FSS chapters and Ambassadors (free or at-cost depending on FSS-National funding). Our signage includes information about FSS and a QR code that links to our national office so we can welcome and process those newly affected. Crash signs can also be customizable with a QR code that you can use to link to local chapter activities. (Note that this is a concrete task that FSS members and others could volunteer to do.)

- **ONLINE PRESENCE:** Establish a social media account (and be active on it) and have a web presence. Find links to FSS chapter websites [here](#) to guide you. A few things to consider including on your website:
  - Information about the chapter including an explanation of the relationship with sponsoring organization
  - Contact for chapter staff and volunteer member lead(s) if applicable
  - Link to FSS [online national post-crash resource guide](#) and local resources
  - Calendar of events/upcoming emotional support gatherings, trainings, advocacy opportunities
  - News/blog (even links to relevant articles)
  - Member stories: the [DC chapter](#) has a fantastic one
  - Link to [FSS-National online membership form](#) (and we will share contacts with you for all members in your area)
- **BRANDED MATERIAL:** Wear FSS t-shirts and pins anytime you gather for an event or meet with an elected official (e.g., rallies, community meetings). FSS gear lets people in the larger community know that the group exists and that street safety is an issue worthy of their attention.
- **NEWS STORIES:** Contact journalists who have reported on a crash and interviewed family or community members. Though a journalist can't give you a family member's information, they can pass yours along to them.
- **MEDIA:** Were your FSS members interviewed by the media? Make sure to share your FSS chapter email address and telephone number with the reporter and/or ask that they link to the FSS-National website so that we can refer members to you. Making the chapter findable is one of the best ways to recruit members.
- **REFERRAL SOURCES:** Develop a list of contacts who may come across crash victims. Ask them to share FSS as a resource when they meet a victim or family, and share FSS information and presentations with them. Share our [FSS tri-fold brochure](#) with them. Key categories to reach out to and establish relationships with:
  - First responders
  - Hospitals, especially your local trauma hospital(s)
  - Community-based mental health services, clinics
  - Rehabilitation centers focused on traumatic brain injury
  - Attorneys who focus on crash-related injury and loss
  - Your local elected officials' constituent services staff
  - Hospital chaplains and local faith institutions
  - Police and district attorneys

Here is a [template](#) spreadsheet to use or modify to track your expanding network.

## **BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUR NETWORK**

With a list of potential referral sources identified, it's time to build relationships with them. **Ask to meet their staff and make a presentation.** Talk about the work FSS does, its importance, and their role in telling potential members about FSS. Most importantly, describe the regenerative

and helpful role FSS plays. Tell them how to access FSS support services and resources; and share opportunities for them to join in advocacy — a process that many find helpful and empowering.

If an outreach presentation is not possible, ask if you can have a 10-minute conversation to share information about FSS and learn more about this community partner.

Here are two samples you can modify and use from [New York City](#) and [San Francisco](#) to get you started. Make sure your presentation includes:

- Local photographs
- Local FSS member stories
- Local crash statistics, if available
- Your chapter phone number and email
- Upcoming events at the end of the presentation
- Links to your:
  - Chapter newsletter if you have one
  - Your FSS lead's email
  - Our national [membership form](#)
  - Our online community hub
  - The FSS-National calendar of support community events available [online](#)

Once someone has indicated their interest in helping connect you to potential members, **follow up is key**. Here are some actions to help you build relationships after your presentation:

- Send any collateral you have such as a brochure or information card. We have developed a [post card](#) including centralized FSS contact information you are welcome to have printed (or we can send you some). Or consider creating your own based on this sample.
- Let them know about any upcoming actions or support activities and ask them to promote these to their community.
- If you offer a regular newsletter, be sure they sign up to receive it.



## HOW TO APPROACH NEW MEMBERS

Of course you don't know what to say: there is nothing to say except to express how sorry you are for their loss. **The FSS-National office is able to help, and has centralized staff to conduct that first conversation with new crash victims/survivors.** Please contact us and we can have that first challenging conversation and then connect the member back with you for ongoing engagement.

Even if we do that first meeting, you will still have to have a first conversation with prospective members. The most important thing you can do initially is just listen. Inviting people to share their stories is also very powerful.

A family member might be eager to talk about their loved one, or they may not want to talk right away. Give them the information, encourage them to use the FSS-National support services, and then let them decide when and how to become engaged. It may be right away, it may take months, it may be never.



A few key suggestions:

## KEY DO'S & DON'TS

### DO

- Be a good listener.
- Encourage them to share about the person.
- Respect the person's way of grieving.
- Be empathetic. It's okay for you to show your feelings.
- Offer words that touch the heart.
- Understand that everyone has their own unique reaction and no response is "wrong."
- Provide resources/logistical assistance if you are able

### DON'T

- Give advice.
- Try to explain the loss/injury.
- Share your religious beliefs on the reason.
- Try to cheer them up or point out the positive things they may still have in their life (e.g., other children, etc.).



If you receive the contact information for someone recently impacted, feel free to personalize this [outreach template](#) to crash victims/survivors.

## 8. GETTING A CHAPTER OFF THE GROUND

Once a core group has formed, and all chapter rubric requirements are met, several things need to happen to actually launch a chapter. They can be done in any order, or simultaneously. One group may find it helps to identify a sponsoring organization early in order to have a support framework for organizing and planning the first meeting. Another group may prefer to hold the meeting first, and approach potential sponsors with a plan. FSS-National can also connect you with other chapters to hear directly about their experience and learn from them as you begin the process, or you may find them directly in our online community.

### GETTING STARTED

First off: it *will* take time to get the chapter started. For people who are ready, FSS can provide a positive, therapeutic outlet for grief, rage, and sorrow, and there is research showing that doing this kind of advocacy work can be tremendously helpful. But it can also be painful.

Whether you are a family member or staff of a partner organization, please keep in mind that potential founding members were and are traumatized, and that **outreach and initial efforts must be trauma-informed**. Please read the section on [Member Outreach](#) to prepare before you speak with potential members: it is critical to remember and be sensitive to the trauma potential members have experienced.

It's also helpful to have a conversation with FSS-National staff who can explain the FSS approach to balancing advocacy and support services, help chapter organizers identify a sponsoring organization and obtain a signed MOU, and serve as a resource as planners organize the first meeting and launch the chapter publicly.

### PARTNER ORGANIZATION

FSS expects new chapters to be based within an already existing organization that will sponsor and support the work. Working with a partner organization rather than starting a new organization means that traffic safety advocacy and support services will get started faster and require fewer resources. Existing organizations already have important legal and other basic structures in place, including incorporation and tax-exempt status. A sponsoring organization may have advocacy experience, and contacts with state and local elected officials. Each individual arrangement may be different: the sponsoring organization may provide staff who can help organize or guide the first meeting, organize outreach efforts (see [Member Outreach](#)), and provide models for the operating decisions and bylaws the chapter will need to adopt in the coming weeks.

**Sponsoring organizations also gain from the collaboration:** Participating in the sponsoring organization's advocacy amplifies FSS member voices — and FSS in turn amplifies the sponsoring organization's efforts.

Despite the advantages of the partnership, it is important to understand that the dynamics of the relationship between FSS members and the chapter sponsoring organizations can also be complicated. There is potential for feelings of exploitation, so the chapter should empower families and include FSS members in conversations about advocacy priorities and actions. The perspective that those affected by traffic violence bring to this work is critical to advancing an organization's advocacy goals. And always, the organization should check in with FSS members and be sure they feel heard and supported. Support, empowerment, and healing are the key foci here.

Expect and be prepared for challenges. A few considerations for the partnership:

- **MISSION ALIGNMENT:** The sponsoring organization's mission may not mesh perfectly with FSS. For example, FSS' efforts for street safety are aimed at everyone, including drivers, an aim that may not be completely aligned with the mission of all sponsoring advocacy organizations. Such as those organizations that focus exclusively on cycling.
- **PROCESS:** Make sure to jointly create processes for setting strategy, making decisions and allocating resources. Some of our chapters have learned the hard way that a lack of clarity at the start can cause difficulties later.
- **PACE:** Make sure to jointly plan for the pace of the work. Survivors and families of victims often have a sense of urgency and want to move at a fast pace, but those of you who have been doing this work for decades realize that change is slow. It took a generation to make drinking and driving socially unacceptable. It will take decades for us to achieve the change we want. It will be up to the chapter organizers and sponsoring organization to adjust the expectations of FSS members and maintain a sustainable pace.
- **PRIORITIES:** It can be hard to engage members on the one or two key priority areas selected by the group. Some people may come with a desire to address the issue that caused their particular crash and this may not be one of the current priority areas. We have tried to support people in their individual efforts **while still maintaining a focused group effort**. However, it can be a delicate balance that is not always so easy to do. Remember, however: if you're trying to do everything, you will accomplish nothing.
- **SUPPORTERS:** Make sure to also identify ways to engage the larger community of the crash victims/survivors – their friends, colleagues, neighbors – and plug them into existing grassroots efforts of the sponsoring organization. FSS *members* must either be a family member, or someone who survived a crash, but this does not preclude friends from supporting in other ways.
- **BOARD:** Include FSS members in leadership positions of the sponsoring organization, including having one board position reserved for an FSS member.

## THE FIRST MEETING

Having made the commitment to starting an FSS chapter, it's time to identify founding members to convene for your first meeting. Please review the previous section, Member Outreach, for information about how to reach possible members, and most importantly, for guidance on how to approach members in a sensitive and trauma-informed way.



Your meeting facilitator can be someone from the sponsoring organization, a chapter member, or if resources allow, an independent consultant. In addition to planning an agenda, most important is that the facilitator uses a trauma-informed approach that ensures FSS members feel supported and creates a safe and empowering environment.

Take the time to plan the first meeting very carefully. Not everyone will want to speak about their grief and trauma, especially if it is recent. There will be unavoidable tensions in a group with such strong emotions and extreme vulnerabilities. It takes a lot of empathy and patience to bring family members and survivors to this work. It will take those qualities and considerable time to form into a group and train members as effective advocates.

- **BEFORE MEETING:** Call your list of potential attendees to remind them of your upcoming meeting, take the one-on-one time to get a sense of what they are most interested in/hoping to get out of the meeting.
- **AGENDA:** Start with a list of what the planners want to accomplish, and use that to develop an agenda (sample template [here](#)). Consider having the group break out in small groups or pairs so participants can discuss what brought each of them to the meeting. Then bring the group back together so they can debrief, and move on to the next parts of the agenda.
- **RITUAL:** We strongly recommend opening and closing your meetings with a brief ritual to help ground the conversation and build trust and community. This can be a simple prompt, a candle lighting, or a shared moment of silence.
- **TAKE MINUTES:** Not every member will be able to make every meeting. It's important to have details to share after meetings so members feel like they are in-the-loop and engaged, even when they miss a meeting or two.
- **FOLLOW UP:** Always share notes, and it is recommended to do one-on-one follow up with anyone new who might have attended the meeting.

## Chapter Spotlight: NYC

FSS convened for the first time in February, 2014. We had nearly 30 people in attendance, and we hired a professional facilitator trained in a group meeting approach called “Art of Hosting,” a participatory and interactive approach based on the belief that people participate more in small groups and are more likely to become engaged when each person has a voice in the process. This approach meshes well with the principles of trauma-informed care: safety, choice, collaboration, trustworthiness and empowerment. It was a very emotional and effective day. People shared their pain, bonded with one another, and created a level of trust that was essential for everything that followed.

The [Art of Hosting](#) website shares guidance on how to incorporate this important perspective into your meeting.

At our first meeting, the 30 attendees had 40 ideas. We needed help and a structure to settle on the one or two that would be the best place to invest our time and money, and we needed help deciding who would be in charge. Our partner organization, TA, was very helpful as we sorted out these issues.

## SETTING UP A GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The next step is to formulate goals and objectives, develop by-laws, describe the roles of leadership or officers, and identify initial Steering Committee members or a group of officers.

As outlined in the Mission & Core Values section above, to become a chapter, chapter leaders must support FSS core values:

- Commitment to Data-Driven Goals & Systemic Change
- Bold & Strategic Organizing Tactics
- Consistent Messaging
- Inclusivity
- Collaboration
- Clear & Effective Decision-Making
- Compassion & Understanding
- Determination

### *Leadership & Committee Structure*

Different FSS chapters have developed different governance structures. Some chapters find it useful to create committees. Established committees ensure members share the work of running a chapter. Committees provide a platform for drawing on individual chapter members’ strengths and interests. Joining a committee can also increase buy-in among chapter members outside the core leadership group.

The New York City chapter organizes itself along six committees, a few of which are part of the [FSS-National governance structure](#).

- Executive
- Policy and Advocacy
- Support
- Outreach
- Communications
- Fundraising and National Expansion

This is a more complex structure than other chapters because it is larger and more well-established. Smaller chapters have co-chairs and a steering committee. The structure the chapter chooses should reflect its size. There should be a clear decision-making process that enables members to have a voice and strives for consensus.

When adding members to the leadership, look for people with the following skills: ability to listen, diplomacy, personal organization, goal setting, and willingness to foster leadership in others.

In addition to formal leadership roles, it is important to always look for opportunities to elevate FSS members as leaders. For example, consider if a member wants to organize a group potluck or a few people to take ownership over WDoR planning. Make concrete asks of people so they know what they're doing and feel like they're contributing – this can help train them to assume more formal leadership roles in the future.

### *Parliamentary Procedure*

Agreeing on a process to run meetings and come to decisions will help the chapter establish a streamlined procedure that will allow chapter members to have a voice in decision-making while increasing chapter transparency and engagement. As indicated above, the goal is to include as many people's opinions as possible, discuss issues thoroughly, and try to reach consensus on a good decision. Once group members know the general process for running a meeting, voting, and record keeping, they won't have to think about how each meeting will function.

There are several sources of governance guidance to consider. Organizations often use Robert's Rules of Order to run meetings, though we believe this is too formal for our purposes. Another source to consider is Martha's Rules, a less formal, agenda-focused approach to planning meetings. The New York City chapter has developed its own way of proceeding.

### *Bylaws*

Writing bylaws may feel overly bureaucratic but there are definite advantages to having written bylaws. By talking through draft bylaws and agreeing on language, everyone present can come to a shared understanding of your chapter's purpose and its relationship to the sponsoring organization. As leadership changes over years written bylaws can make sure the purpose stays consistent.

In the New York City chapter, we recently updated our leadership structure and governance guidelines. You can find a copy [here](#).

## *Quorum*

A quorum is the minimum number of members who must be present during a meeting in order to conduct business on behalf of the chapter. A quorum rule protects the chapter against unrepresentative action taken by one or two individuals acting under the chapter name. The baseline quorum required for a chapter is three people. As your chapter grows, you may want to consider increasing the quorum.

## *Formulate Goals and Objectives*

Our overall goal is to advocate for changes that will have the most consequential impact. Hence, all of our work is data-driven, and focused on efforts that will save the most lives. (See [Advocacy Campaigns](#) for more detail.) Each year the chapter should work closely with its sponsoring organization to identify community-wide or systemic campaigns, then plan the actions to be taken to seek change inside the system and through public events such as rallies and demonstrations. Lay out specific plans for the year, including short- and long-term goals, in writing. Once you've done that you'll be able to agree on who will do each task.

## *Meeting Minutes*

Record-keeping is important. Taking minutes of each meeting helps keep a record of discussions and decisions made. Reviewing previous meetings' agendas and minutes can help leadership prepare for subsequent meetings. Members should decide who is responsible for recording minutes; if an organization has a secretary, minutes are usually the responsibility of the secretary. Meeting minutes are important for a number of reasons:

- To record actions and decisions made by the chapter at each meeting, and have these records available for reference;
- To share with members who were unable to attend the meeting;
- A helpful history for new members to review;
- To help prepare the information you will need to coordinate efforts with the sponsoring organization, the chapter, and possibly FSS-National; and
- To help leadership prepare the agenda for the next meeting.

## *Communication*

FSS-National provides an online community hub using the "Geneva" platform to help chapter members communicate with one another, facilitate communication between chapters, ambassadors, and members nationally, share resources, and announce activities and events.

In addition, FSS-National provides a semi-monthly email newsletter to all individual members, ambassadors, chapter members, and sponsoring organization leads.

Sponsoring organizations may also want to consider creating a Google Group for your local chapter as a practical and easy way for members to stay in touch and/or sending a regular e-newsletter to share information on upcoming events, advocacy efforts and more. Here is a

FSS [e-newsletter template](#) that you can modify. This one is built with Google docs. You may also want to consider starting a blog to share with your members and supporters.

## THE NEXT STEPS

Now the work starts.

**We recommend (and Vision Zero supports) an “upstream” or systemic approach to change.**

We are not trying to change one person’s behavior at a time. Rather, we want to influence systems that affect significant numbers of people.

**Research shows that transformation only comes with bold change to law and policy, and it is in forging that kind of political change that FSS has the most to offer.** While some may want to put effort into things like teen driver education or creative messaging campaigns, for example, these strategies are only minimally effective.



We know that investing in Complete Streets (designs that are safe for all road users, see the “Road Safety Basics” chapter) and policies that prioritize safety over speed are the most influential components of traffic safety. Advocacy around policies like lower speed limits, automated enforcement, and safer vehicles is critical. FSS leadership and sponsoring organization staff should assist the FSS chapter in focusing on what works, even though these efforts are often more politically challenging.

Determining advocacy focus, marketing, and events also happen in these early stages – they’ll help your chapter grow, attracting members who will support your advocacy efforts. This is a time, also, to consider whether to include support services along with the advocacy you’ll be doing or if you will rely exclusively on FSS-National’s support services. See [Support Services/Creating Community](#), below.

**Marketing** can play an important role in a chapter’s success. Marketing makes FSS visible—to the outside world, the media, and future potential members—and helps promote group identity. The sponsoring organization should plan on hosting a website for the chapter as well as helping chapter members manage social media sites (Facebook, Twitter, Tik-Tok, Instagram). Provide t-shirts for members, bracelets, campaign-pin buttons, ideally with the FSS logo and color scheme as well as the region, and brand materials whenever possible. This is not to sell the group so much as to help define it and to help members take pride in being part of it.

We recommend that you include the national hotline and centralized email in all of your promotional materials. This way we can have someone trained in trauma-sensitive outreach connect with all new members and refer them directly to your chapter. If you wish, you can also

set-up a general email address (e.g., info@YOURCHAPTERNAME) and can auto-forward to appropriate sponsoring organization staff and chapter leadership. Sponsoring organization staff should assist the chapter leadership in creating these communication channels, in addition to setting up a Google Group or other digital mechanisms that makes it easier for group members to communicate and plan.



Partnering organizations and chapter leadership should also begin collaboration on an official **launch**. Announcing the creation of a chapter can be a major press opportunity. Consider announcing it at the first public event, possibly even on the World Day of Remembrance, held the 3rd Sunday in November. Or use the World Day of Remembrance to bring more attention to your first key effort to promote a specific change. It is a unique opportunity to get widespread media attention. See Chapter 6, “Fundraising and Events,” for more information.

Successful events require planning! In order to have successful events, we recommend developing a detailed action plan (sample [here](#)). Again, this work can be a collaboration between chapter leadership and the sponsoring organization. It may also make sense to provide some advocacy and organizing education, and help members develop talking points, to help them maximize their effectiveness. (See [Advocacy](#).)

“

My fiancée Sonya Powell was a warm loving person who meant everything to me. She was beautiful inside, out, and always went out of her way to help people. Life was good. We were in love and looking forward to spending our life together. We had a wonderful Thanksgiving family gathering and we felt blessed.

But on the night after Thanksgiving, we were walking home together when Sonya was struck and killed by a reckless driver right in front of my eyes. And then the driver fled the scene.

I was devastated. And I was angry. I was angry not just at that driver but at the culture of reckless driving. Two days later, crossing at that same crosswalk, I was almost hit by another driver, and a few months prior to the crash there had been a huge vigil for some others who had died in a traffic crash nearby – it was just out of control. In addition, while there have been improvements, it still is out of control.

This is why I got involved and still fight for change.

”

**DAVE SHEPHARD**

**FIANCÉE OF SONYA POWELL**



## 9. FUNDRAISING AND EVENTS

Staff, merchandise, and advocacy all require funding. Each chapter will likely need to raise funds to support the work. Asking for money can be hard, but it isn't just about the money: fundraising can help members spread awareness about FSS and its advocacy and support work. As individual members ask their friends and contacts for donations they are building relationships. Their networks will help the chapter find new members, as well as new donors.

There are multiple ways to go about raising money. Chapters should coordinate fundraising with the partnering organization and the FSS-National office. Bear in mind that the money will go through the partnering organization as your fiscal sponsor — the sponsoring organization can collect tax-deductible donations. Make sure to have the sponsoring organization account for donations to FSS separately.

Most fundraising experts recommend developing an **individual** and **institutional** donor base to ensure long-term viability and growth. Don't expect to do all the chapter's fundraising at once, or in the first year. It can take time to develop and cultivate relationships that result in donations; in the case of institutional donors, it can take months or even years for a contact to result in a contribution.

### INDIVIDUAL DONORS

Chapter members can start developing relationships with **individual donors** by writing a letter or sending an email to their friends' contacts. We have provided a template, [here](#). Please modify it for individual circumstances and the chapter's community.<sup>2</sup> The FSS chapter and the sponsoring organization can consider developing a shared event as well.<sup>3</sup> Build in donor retention by writing thank you notes to donors or, if possible, calling donors within 48 hours to thank them. Once the FSS chapter has started receiving donations it can begin to create a list of supporters.<sup>4</sup> The chapter or sponsoring organization may decide to reach out to them again in an end-of-year solicitation.

#### *Peer-to-Peer Fundraising*

In addition, FSS-National provides opportunities for FSS chapters to use peer-to-peer fundraising to raise funds for the chapters, with a percentage going to support FSS-National so that we can continue to grow and support this movement. Members can turn painful holidays such as (Mother's Day, Father's Day, Valentine's Day, Christmas, Chanukah, etc.) and marking days such as their loved one's birthday or anniversary into a way for their friends and family to support them. FSS-National provides individual assistance, convenes group meetings with

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<sup>2</sup> Good instruction on drafting a letter here:

<https://chuffed.org/academy/articles/detail/steps-to-writing-an-awesome-non-profit-crowdfunding-pitch>

<sup>3</sup> Useful example [here](#).

<sup>4</sup> More information, including follow ups and automation, [here](#)



members who are organizing fundraisers, and has a detailed [P2P Fundraising Guide](#).

## INSTITUTIONAL DONORS

Cultivating relationships with **institutional donors** can result in helpful support, but it may take time to develop and build a relationship. Start by doing the research! Most institutional donors, even family foundations, have already determined the general areas they will fund. No matter how compelling the member's story, don't even ask if traffic safety is not something the fund is interested in supporting. Start by looking up the foundation in the Foundation Directory grantmaker profiles. Then look at its website, and any news articles. Follow any directions about how to apply for funds very carefully. Take a look at the list of board members and staff. If any of those networks overlap, use the connection to introduce the member, FSS, and the sponsoring organization. There's more information about how to approach a foundation and build a relationship [here](#).

Applying for a grant takes time, so choose applications carefully. Grants are available from governmental and non-governmental sources. Businesses may be willing to provide support in communities where they operate or have stores. Many statewide organizations offer grants as well. Look for grants using the Foundation Center's Online directory—many public libraries have this program on their computers for you to use for free. If you see a foundation that looks like a good fit, follow the instructions. Even if the foundation says it does not accept unsolicited proposals, consider reaching out with a Letter of Interest, a one-page description of the chapter and why its project furthers the foundation's goals. If the foundation is interested it will invite the chapter or sponsoring agency to submit a proposal.

### *Corporate Sponsors*

Identifying and developing **corporate sponsors** is another way to build institutional support. Many companies will provide support to events or activities in communities where they do business, including banks and large stores. Spread the chapter's net wide, but choose carefully. Look at what types of events the organization has sponsored in the past. Make sure to follow all guidelines closely. Be prepared to be turned down, but don't give up! It may take some time for the business to get to know the chapter.

## MERCHANDISE

Merchandise such as t-shirts and pins are helpful for identifying FSS members and supporters. FSS-National provides branded material at cost to all FSS chapters and Ambassadors. FSS-National also provides crash signs with FSS-brand and link via QR code (at cost or free of charge depending on funding).

## EVENTS

Although they are a lot of work, preparing and holding events bring many benefits to FSS chapters and sponsoring organizations. An event can create attention, help spread the word

about the work, and bring people together face-to-face. In addition to raising money for the chapter, events build community and extend FSS' reach. Planning and completing a successful event also strengthens the chapter and its members: members learn to trust that each will complete promised work.

### *Local Events & Vigils*

There are many types of events FSS chapters have held, including vigils, press conferences, and rallies. Collectively, FSS comes together annually to mark World Day of Remembrance, held each year on the third Sunday in November to commemorate road traffic victims. In addition, chapters have held 5K Run-Walk-Roll events and we have come together to do this together as well. FSS-National in coordination with Transportation Alternatives also enters a team into the New York City Marathon each year, which can be a model for marathon races across the country.

These are not the only possibilities, but do think about the relationship of the event to the subject matter: for example, a run/walk/roll event keeps cars off streets for the duration of the event, reinforcing the idea that streets can be shared spaces. A Run-Walk-Roll can commemorate a family member, celebrate your chapter's accomplishments, serve as a fundraiser, or all three. Events take a lot of work so please plan accordingly.



Holding a memorial vigil is an opportunity to memorialize members of your community who have been killed or seriously injured in a crash, draw attention to your demands for legislative and policy change, and provide support to the family.

Many struggle with when and how to effectively do so in a way that takes into consideration the family's wishes. Here's some tips:

- **Contact the family:** We recommend that you contact the family and make sure they are either interested in participating or at least are ok with you holding it. Consider reaching out via the local elected official to make this request if you do not have other connections.
- **Memorial:** Consider posting an FSS crash sign, ghost bike, or other marker to draw attention to the horrific loss of life and serious injuries that can potentially stay up after the vigil.
- **Frequency:** Many chapters struggle with how often to hold a vigil, particularly if you live in a large community where the loss of life in crashes is far too frequent. Some chapters hold vigils for the first person to die each year or month, if the family requests one, on a dangerous corridor to highlight the need for change, etc.

- Planning: Make sure to invite local elected officials, community leaders, FSS members and the media. Feel free to use this [vigil planning checklist](#) and [sample “run of show”](#) (i.e., the order and length of time speakers and activities at an event).

### *World Day of Remembrance*

World Day of Remembrance brings FSS together with street safety organizations, community members, faith leaders, elected officials, and dignitaries from across the globe to **REMEMBER, SUPPORT, and ACT**. World Day of Remembrance is a good foundational or launch event for new chapters, as it can call attention to your advocacy campaign and attract new members.



World Day of Remembrance activities are limited only by the creativity of the organizers. Past memorializations include candle lighting, placing a yellow rose for each person killed or seriously injured on the steps of city hall or another prominent location, and leading a memorial walk. In 2020, chapters across the country participated in first-ever a joint World Day of Remembrance action, prominently displaying shoes to represent lives lost in their community.



FSS-National, in coordination with other national organizations, provides training, including storytelling training and press engagement; monthly planning meetings, individual event and media consultation, and a detailed organizer’s toolkit. Detailed guide to help you plan your World Day of Remembrance commemoration and all information you need on the [WDoR-USA website](#).

### **ORGANIZE AND DELEGATE**

No matter what type of event you are planning, the basic steps are the same.

Create a planning team and assign yourselves roles. This could be a committee already formed within the chapter. Create a shared Google doc or other workspace with event details, contact

information, and delegated tasks. Recruit chapter members to sign up for volunteer shifts: setting up, staffing registration, cleaning up, etc. Track all signups — volunteers and participants — in a shared workspace. This is an important opportunity to build your community and empower FSS members. See our [event planning template](#) to help you stay organized.

### *Choose a Date, Time, and Location*

World Day of Remembrance always happens on the 3rd Sunday in November, so we hope you'll hold your event then so you can be a part of our national and international partnership.

For other events, we recommend picking a date when members and invitees will have time—a weekend or summer late afternoon. Is your location central and easily accessible? What will it look like in photos? Does it have symbolic value: a government building, the site of a crash? When picking a location for a Run-Walk-Roll event, think about safety and the course's characteristics: is it hilly or flat? Will it loop or will participants end up in a different location from where they started? Don't forget to research the permits and insurance your local government will require. For more information about planning a 5K, [see this website](#), or [this one](#).

### *Create an Online Registration Form*

The simpler it is to register, the more inviting your event. It's easy to create a simple registration document using Google Forms. Make sure to collect full information, including addresses (for thank you notes), the event that brought the person to FSS, how the person learned of FSS (always good to have this information), and if you are holding a walk, run, or other physical activity, emergency contacts. It's a good practice to include a link so that people can donate even if they don't register.

### *Publicize the Event*

Start early! It will take time for people to decide to participate, and if you're holding a walk or run, to line up their friends and family to sponsor them. Plan to begin publicity about three months before the event. Posters, web pages, Facebook pages are a great start, and personalized emails — that include a link for a donation or sponsorship — are also effective.

### *Corporate Sponsors*

Some businesses are willing to sponsor an event in communities where they do business. Finding the sponsor and working out an arrangement take three or four months of lead time. Brainstorm all of the personal connections the chapter members have with local businesses, organizations, and individuals and start there. Cold calls to local businesses can be very successful as well. Track all sponsorships and donations on a spreadsheet as they come in. This will help with thank yous following the event, and help the chapter members continue to build relationships with sponsors.

Approach small local businesses individually; larger, regional and national chains often have websites that explain the process for applying for a grant or sponsorship. Read all material

carefully and follow the instructions! Also consider applying for [Google Ad Grants](#), which gives qualifying non-profits up to \$10,000 per month in search ads shown on Google.com. Use the ads to publicize your events. Invite media to the event – see our [press release template](#).

It's a good idea to put one person in charge of donations and sponsorship (usually the chapter treasurer). Develop a form letter for solicitations, and share with the planning team.

### *Day of the Event*

Have a plan for your volunteers, and brief them in advance. Make sure to take pictures. If there are no photos, it didn't happen!

### *Follow-up*

Following the event, send thank you notes to all sponsors, donors, and to the volunteer crew for the time and effort they put in. Did the chapter invite media to the event? Send reporters photos from the event and let them know members are available to speak to them about the event. Did elected officials attend? Send their staff a thank-you email.

### *Report Back*

If you got any press, please share with National FSS so we can amplify. The more coverage the event gets locally, the more impact we can make at a national scale.

## **10. STREET SAFETY BASICS**

We recognize that not all advocacy organizations or new FSS chapter organizers will know about the policies or solutions to addressing the epidemic of traffic violence and preventing deadly crashes. The following is a brief overview intended to introduce new members to what is happening and can happen when the political will exists.

## VISION ZERO

*Why we say 'Crash' and not 'Accident'*



Drivers kill over 40,000 people in the U.S. each year. As stated by the [Vision Zero Network](#): "We can prevent these tragedies by taking a proactive, preventative approach that prioritizes traffic safety as a public health issue." We use the term 'crash,' rather than 'accident,' because these tragedies are preventable. They are not random — but happen because of individual, community, and political choices. The Vision Zero model posits that traffic crashes are preventable, that no number of traffic deaths is acceptable, and that traffic system designers and policy makers must share responsibility for preventing them. Vision Zero was developed in Sweden in 1994 and has spread widely in the developed world. By 2022 the continent of Europe, more than 45 U.S. cities, New Zealand, and parts of Australia have adopted Vision Zero. Understanding Vision Zero principles is a helpful starting point for FSS chapters; even if a city or region has adopted Vision Zero, effective implementation may require advocacy or additional political pressure.

Unlike the traditional approach to traffic safety that focuses on individual responsibility, Vision Zero uses a Safe System approach, one that takes a holistic view of the road system.

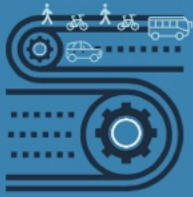


Two of the most important safe system principles are that humans make mistakes, and that everyone — including car manufacturers and transportation system designers and managers — has a role to play in safety. Safe system elements include addressing the safety of all road users, making vehicles safe, keeping speeds and roads safe, and effective post-crash care. Using crash and other data, the Safe System approach refocuses transportation design to anticipate human error and lessen crash impact: for example, a lighter car and slower speed limit reduces crash severity and saves lives.

Vision Zero is an approach, one that allows elected leaders, public officials, and advocacy groups to hold themselves accountable for progress and change.



In the U.S., Vision Zero activists have identified the ten Core Elements for Vision Zero communities – requiring leadership and commitment; authentic engagement: safe roadways & safe speeds: and data-driven approach, transparency and accountability:



# CORE ELEMENTS FOR VISION ZERO COMMUNITIES

## Leadership and Commitment

### 1. Public, High-Level, and Ongoing Commitment.

The Mayor and key elected officials and leaders within public agencies, including transportation, public health, and police, commit to a goal of eliminating traffic fatalities and serious injuries within a specific timeframe. Leadership across these agencies consistently engages in prioritizing safety via a collaborative working group and other resource-sharing efforts.

**2. Authentic Engagement.** Meaningful and accessible community engagement toward Vision Zero strategy and implementation is employed, with a focus on equity.

**3. Strategic Planning.** A Vision Zero Action Plan is developed, approved, and used to guide work. The Plan includes explicit goals and measurable strategies with clear timelines, and it identifies responsible stakeholders.

**4. Project Delivery.** Decision-makers and system designers advance projects and policies for safe, equitable multi-modal travel by securing funding and implementing projects, prioritizing roadways with the most pressing safety issues.

### Equity and Engagement

Elevating equity and meaningful community engagement, particularly in low-income communities and communities of color, should be a priority in all stages of Vision Zero work.

## Safe Roadways and Safe Speeds

**5. Complete Streets for All.** Complete Streets concepts are integrated into communitywide plans and implemented through projects to encourage a safe, well-connected transportation network for people using all modes of transportation. This prioritizes safe travel of people over expeditious travel of motor vehicles.

**6. Context-Appropriate Speeds.** Travel speeds are set and managed to achieve safe conditions for the specific roadway context and to protect all roadway users, particularly those most at risk in crashes. Proven speed management policies and practices are prioritized to reach this goal.

## Data-driven Approach, Transparency, and Accountability

**7. Equity-Focused Analysis and Programs.** Commitment is made to an equitable approach and outcomes, including prioritizing engagement and investments in traditionally under-served communities and adopting equitable traffic enforcement practices.

**8. Proactive, Systemic Planning.** A proactive, systems-based approach to safety is used to identify and address top risk factors and mitigate potential crashes and crash severity.

**9. Responsive, Hot Spot Planning.** A map of the community's fatal and serious injury crash locations is developed, regularly updated, and used to guide priority actions and funding.

**10. Comprehensive Evaluation and Adjustments.** Routine evaluation of the performance of all safety interventions is made public and shared with decision makers to inform priorities, budgets, and updates to the Vision Zero Action Plan.



## WHAT VISION ZERO IS NOT

### *Individual Driver Accountability*

While driver's education appears to be a solution, individual behavior change is a notoriously complex process with unreliable results. According to National Institutes of Health [research](#) – education, whether at the individual or community level, is not effective at lowering fatal or injury crashes.

Increased enforcement has also proven less effective in reducing crashes. A [recent study](#) analyzing 150 million traffic stops made by patrol officers in 33 states between 2006-2016 found no significant correlation between high rates of police stops per mile and low crash rate per mile, or between a high crash rate and low policing rate. There is also not a lot of data showing that harsh penalties for reckless drivers are effective in reducing dangerous driving and preventing future crashes.

In short, we will never educate or enforce our way out of this epidemic. Nations that perform better than the U.S. all have taken a **systemic approach** eliminating crashes, focusing on redesigning their roadways, mandating safe vehicle designs and technology, and lowering speed limits. The [Vision Zero Network website](#) has a great deal of detailed, helpful webinars on its website including Demystifying the Safe System Approach, Where to Start on the Road to Vision Zero, and a Vision Zero Road Map. For other resources to learn more about Vision Zero: The U.S. [Department of Transportation](#), [League of American Cyclists website](#), and [ActionVisionZero](#).

While we do not dissuade individual members from holding the driver involved in the crash accountable or participating in driver safety education, we do not expend significant resources to do so. FSS has a post-crash resource guide on our website to help members with all of the post-crash logistics including driver accountability. We also encourage members to consider restorative justice as a possible means of accountability (see [Support Services](#) for additional information on restorative justice).



## 11. CREATING AN ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN

### LOCAL ADVOCACY

Traffic violence solutions are often local, and through our local, grassroots, community-based organizing we make our voices heard and push for change. FSS' advocacy grows out of our three-part model of building partnerships, telling our stories, and grass-roots campaigning.

In New York City, FSS has successfully advocated to lower the speed limit, won a state law to ensure that speed safety cameras operate 24/7 every day of the year, and pushed for and won Complete Streets legislation and funding, to ensure that streets and roads are planned and designed for roadway users of all ages and abilities, not just drivers.

San Francisco Bay Area FSS members joined California peers from Fresno, Los Angeles, and San Diego to defeat a decades-old speed limit rule that allowed speed limits to be set at the rate of 85% of cars on the road – a senseless practice resulting in deadly 'speed creep.' With this win, cities can now set their own speed limits. Helped by FSS, San Francisco also won tough battles to create a car-free Market Street downtown and a car-free JFK Drive in Golden Gate Park.

### NATIONAL ADVOCACY

In 2021, FSS members from across the country successfully advocated for the country's first-ever national Congressional Resolution calling for Zero Traffic Deaths in the U.S., for the first time establishing the urgent need for a national roadway strategy and safe systems approach that includes safe road design, safe vehicle design, and safe driver behavior. FSS members across the country shared their stories with lawmakers to gain their sponsorship of the congressional resolution, ultimately ensuring the participation of numerous lawmakers.

In 2022, FSS founder Amy Cohen and National Safety Council CEO Lorraine Martin held a fireside chat with U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg to urge local and state lawmakers to embrace Vision Zero strategies to address traffic violence.



With this growing recognition on the national stage, our national coalition of chapters can ensure that our message is heard by the federal government. While much street design and funding takes place at the state or local level, we all have an important stake in federal transportation policy, as federal spending directs local transportation infrastructure as well as development of long-distance transportation options such as trains.

Federal policy also directly affects safety. FSS-National priorities use a data-driven approach and are determined by the FSS-National Executive Committee. Current priorities include:

- Safety regulations for large trucks and SUVs
- Mandatory side guards for large trucks
- Changing the way speed limits are set
- Street design standards that prioritize safety of all road users

## THE POWER OF STORIES

Our stories must be heard. Our personal narratives have moral power, and when elected officials hear us, they can be persuaded or shamed to vote for our positions. Sharing stories with decision-makers and others allows us to convey information about traffic violence and its solutions. When people hear our stories, they are compelled to think about their own loved ones and their responsibility to act.

No matter the political landscape, it is the duty of your representatives to listen to and serve their constituents: you! As human beings we are wired to share and receive stories. For FSS members, telling our stories can be a productive and empowering way to make sense of our world. Stories also have a unique ability to generate empathy and change perspectives. As we saw in 2021, telling our stories can inspire lawmakers to understand the human consequences of traffic violence and win their support of Vision Zero policies.

FSS provides ongoing storytelling training and supports members who wish to share their stories in OpEds, press conferences, meetings with elected officials and more.

### *Data-Driven Decision Making*

Using data to inform decisions means making more careful, confident decisions that are more likely to result in significant positive change. Chapters don't need to hire a data scientist to help them develop data — members can research local data trends from publicly available local data and other sources including Departments of Transportation and Public Health, newspaper reports and individual data gathering efforts.



Source: Federal Highway Administration. Based on data from the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, Impact Speed and a Pedestrian's Risk of Severe Injury or Death, September 2011.

Once a trend is identified, the chapter can agree on its initial target, then collect more detailed data as it plans a campaign. As an example, a chapter may decide to take on speed limits in a

neighborhood or on certain streets. Research shows that the risk of death for a pedestrian at impact increases as the speed of the vehicle increases. During the pandemic, as roads emptied, speeds increased. In fact, in 2020, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration, while miles traveled decreased, the fatality rate increased to 1.37 fatalities per million vehicle miles traveled, up from 1.11 per million vehicle miles traveled in 2019. This type of data provides powerful momentum for a campaign to lower speeds.

In addition to the publicly available data, members can conduct their own data gathering efforts to support advocacy efforts. For example, this [link](#) explains how TA provides instructions to individuals and groups around conducting a speeding survey.

### *Developing and Running an Advocacy Campaign*

Effective advocacy can be simple: *The conditions on this road are dangerous and killed someone. Local leaders have a responsibility to wield their resources to find a solution and implement it now!* FSS members have the moral authority to demand action. But making change requires an effective advocacy campaign so whether you are a first-timer in fighting for change or have done it before, we have laid out what is needed to help you.

Advocacy campaigns require planning. The essentials are to conduct some basic research, identify the agency responsible for building and maintaining the road or intersection, and then gather a strong base of supporters including FSS members and local partners whose voices can demand change. The most important thing FSS members add is to elevate a call to action and provide the moral authority to demand action.

TA's [Your City, Your Voice](#) trainings (see Sample training slides for campaign planning [here](#)) and the Advocacy Incubator's [Advocacy Action Guide: A Toolkit for Strategic Policy Advocacy Campaigns](#) are good planning resources. This is a lengthy list, but not every campaign requires the use of every tool.

According to the guide, the elements of a successful campaign are:

- **Gather background information:** Start with the strategic plan, then research. Does the city or locality build roads and manage transportation infrastructure or is it the state? Which legislators might be involved or interested?
- **Set an objective:** Objectives should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (“SMART”). Objectives should follow from the strategic plan, and be supported by the evidence developed — it won’t be possible for a city to implement a speed safety camera program, for example, if state level legislation prohibits it.
- **Build strong partnerships:** Working as a coalition or in partnership with others is the best way to demonstrate broad support to address an issue or demonstrate support for a policy change. Our most powerful tool is our collective voice. Organizations that have

demonstrated interest in traffic safety issues include local cycling and pedestrian groups; PTAs; school nurse and crossing guard unions; neighborhood associations; and teachers and teachers unions. These and other local partners will be allies in the work ahead. Here is a [sample coalition letter](#) from the NYC effort to secure speed safety cameras. (Note that it took several years to build this powerful coalition. Getting even a few organizations signed on in support for smaller communities may be enough.)

- **Know the political landscape:** Who are the decision makers? What positions on relevant issues have they taken in the past? Are there any groups or individuals likely to oppose the position or policy proposal?
- **Help develop legislation or regulations:** In order to make change the chapter or its representatives might have to become involved in drafting legislation or a regulation, or commenting on a proposed draft. Find someone who is knowledgeable — a lawyer or policy expert can help you analyze the emerging document and understand it and how it will affect your objective.
- **Determine what is non-negotiable:** Compromise is part of making change happen. If the chapter is seeking to have speed cameras installed, perhaps agreeing that they will be installed around schools is a good first outcome. If the chapter is trying to lower a speed limit, settling for 25 mph instead of 20 mph might be an acceptable outcome.
- **Identify legislative targets:** Identify legislators to sponsor the bill and to act as policy champions. Elected representatives are important, but they are only the beginning. There are the people elected representatives listen to: organized groups (think PTA or neighborhood associations).
- **Plan a campaign and develop key strategies:** Most campaigns use a combination of three activities: direct interaction with decision-makers and their influencers, indirect contact through media and social media, and grassroots mobilization. What tactics will you use to reach decision-makers? Are there relevant hearings planned? Do you want to plan and schedule a legislative visiting day? Organize letters and phone calls from voters? Create an online petition to build your base of support? A letter from a coalition, with signatures from all members, demonstrates the breadth of support. Demonstrations are another possibility, as are petitions — both of these tools mobilize your base and show the decision-makers that your position has substantial support. Use the Midwest Academy Strategy Chart (in the [Resources](#) section) to track progress.
- **Prepare to communicate effectively:** Start by developing a pitch, which should include: an introduction; a statement of the problem; the proposed solution; the action you're requesting; and convey a sense of urgency. Include personal stories — the problem statement will include the data, but when an advocate connects a story to the bigger picture the story will resonate and help make the target ready to act. A pitch isn't ready until it includes an answer to the question, "What would you like me to do?" Always

include an ask related to getting the action you want done: a vote, an amendment, a signature. Practice the pitch so it comes quickly and fluidly.

- **Engage the media:** Media can be a helpful tool to raise the profile of the issue, recruit new activities, and hold officials accountable for supporting your cause. Monitoring social media can also help the chapter gauge how its message is being received. Approach media coverage as you would any other aspect of your campaign — with strategy.
  - Respond: If a cyclist or pedestrian is killed or injured on a street the chapter is working to improve, work with partners and elected officials to hold a press conference to honor the individual and call for improvements.
  - Build: Some media coverage before a hearing or meeting can increase momentum and make a target receptive. Make sure to put partners the target cares about in front of the camera.
  - Persist: Even if you're told no the first time (or dozen times) keep the story going: well-placed media attention can let you reframe the issue in your terms and illustrate the support for a cause. Steal the show with data and strong visuals.
  - Conflict: Conflict makes for good stories and appeals to reporters. While a campaign should remain positive, you may have opportunities to reframe your story as a David and Goliath story. Take it — that conflict may be enough to engage the reporter.
  - Tell a story: Reporters will respond. They know their readers will, too.
  - Follow up: No one has to talk to the reporter when they call; ask about their deadline and promise to call back before it. Take the time to prepare and anticipate questions.
- **Run the campaign:** Make presentations to local elected and appointed officials and other targets. If possible, bring supporters and members of the coalition. Including representatives of a broad range of groups can demonstrate how broad community support is. Have each person present mention the number of people they represent. **WE** are more powerful than I.

Be assertive but respectful, and remember that getting the action the chapter has identified may take more than one visit. Communicate your interests, but remember you need to build a relationship, and trust, before anything will happen. Follow up with a thank you repeating the ask. Include the ask in every visit and communication.

- **Monitor and evaluate progress:** Review the plan to make sure the chapter and its partners have taken all planned actions. What was the outcome? What can you learn? Reviewing progress at regular intervals will help hold the chapter and partners accountable and reveal whether or not you are accomplishing your goals.
- **Celebrate success and remain engaged:** Successful advocacy campaigns take time, and are rarely smooth. Celebrate small successes along the way, and thank supporters.

Recognition of efforts will help maintain everyone's commitment, even on the days when it feels as if change will not be possible.

Resources:

- [Midwest Academy Strategy Chart](#)
- [Advocacy Campaigns Checklist](#)
- [Campaign planning documents from Alliance for Biking & Walking](#)
- [Communications training — “Battle of the Story”](#)
- Traffic Injury Research Foundation report, [“Road Safety Campaigns: What the Research Tells Us”](#)

“

When I became a mother, I held my first born and only daughter Ariel in my arms and I told her that she was born to make the world a better place. Having her in my life was pure joy. Every day I was inspired by her inquisitiveness, kindness, creativity, exuberance, bravery and love.

Horribly, my family and I learned the ultimate lesson about how traffic violence can end the life of a child and completely shatter an entire family; crushing all the hopes, dreams, and plans you thought you had for your future. On that Tuesday morning, my 4-year-old daughter was walking to school hand-in-hand with my mother. They were on the sidewalk when they were struck by a reckless driver. I remember when I got the call at work from the officer letting me know that my daughter and my mother had been hit by a car. I remember the moment he said it, I tried to imagine something minor leaving them with just scrapes and bruises but when the officer told me her heart beats per minute, my legs gave out, I was on the floor and I couldn't breathe and I couldn't hear anything because I knew that my daughter's little heart was giving out as we spoke. When I got to the hospital my husband was hysterical and I knew she was gone.

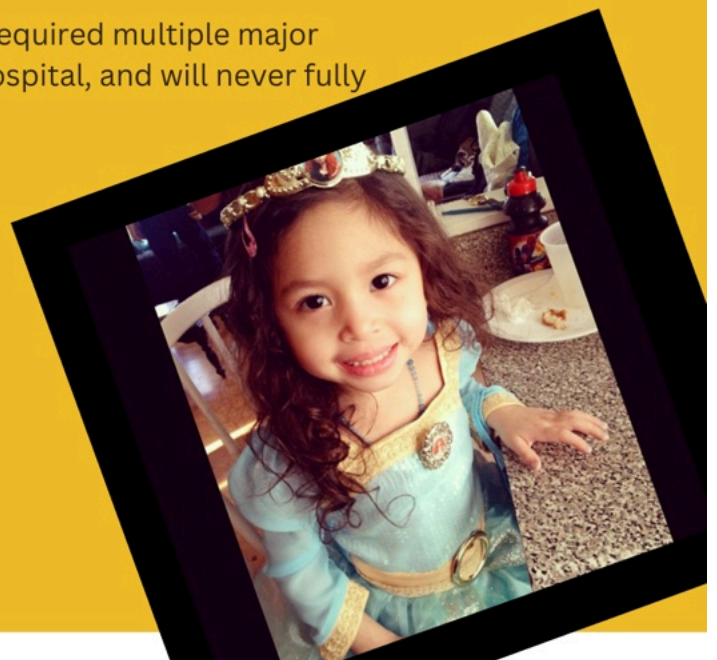
Going home that night without our baby girl was excruciating, heart-breaking, and incomprehensible. Our apartment had her written all over it: her Barbie dream house, her Baby Alive doll, the clothes she handmade for her small stuffed animals from her socks, her art work on the refrigerator, her clothes and shoes all over, and on her bed – the rainbow build-a-bear she had just made. We had to live with a constant sick feeling, like we had poison in us. Our son asked us where Ariel was every single day. When we told him she was in Heaven, he responded “Maybe she's just playing hide-and-seek because that's her favorite game” and he'd look around under the table, in the closets, behind the doors. He did this every day for about six months and we had to start therapy for our 3-year-old because we didn't know what to do.

As for my mother, she was in critical condition, required multiple major surgeries, and had to spend one month in the hospital, and will never fully recover from her injuries.

”

**SOFIA RUSSO**

**MOTHER OF ARIEL RUSSO**





## 12. SUPPORT SERVICES/CREATING COMMUNITY

Just as working together as advocates strengthens our voices, coming together as a community allows FSS members to support each other through the trauma and traumatic aftermath of a crash and helps members feel less alone. Building community is a key part of the work because it addresses the prong of FSS' dual mission to support FSS members through the unimaginable. Creating community and providing support also is crucial to making change.

FSS-National recognizes that sponsoring organizations do not often have the social work background and expertise, so we provide these activities centrally. FSS support services are modeled on those of other victim advocacy groups—such as MADD, Road Peace, and Harlem Mothers Save—and offer a range of activities, including peer mentoring, support groups, a speaker series, and logistical assistance with newly injured survivors and grieving families.

In addition to the formal support services, it is important that each chapter also creates a warm, welcoming and supportive community locally. Though each person's journey through grief or physical pain is unique, our members have the unique ability to support and carry each other through this process.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge the role that FSS' member advocacy plays to channel profound pain and rage many members feel into the work to prevent others from suffering. Telling stories is a powerful, healing, therapeutic way to give remembrance.

### **CENTRALIZED FSS SUPPORT SERVICES**

You do not have to support FSS members alone. We are here to help you. It can be hard for small chapters or those just getting started to feel like they have enough members or sufficient expertise to create a community of their own. Please rely on us.

We offer a range of services that are available to family members who have lost loved ones, individuals who have suffered a serious injury in a crash, and caregivers of crash survivors – whether there is an existing chapter in your community or not.

#### *Initial Outreach*

Our support services team will meet virtually with all new members and be that first point of contact. Using a trauma-focused approach, we will provide emotional support, share information about FSS, connect new members with our centralized support services, and introduce them to the local chapter.

## *Support Community Gatherings*

FSS Support Community monthly meetings are an opportunity for individuals who have been impacted by traffic violence to connect in a structured, supportive environment. Many sessions include guest speakers who help to facilitate a healing modality and provide insight, relevant information, or an experiential activity. We also leave time for discussion and resource sharing. These gatherings are designed to offer support and guidance and to help participants manage the pain and isolation that can occur after trauma and loss.

For a listing of our support community events, see our [online calendar](#) and share with new members and potential referral sources.

## *Peer Mentoring*

FSS Peer Mentoring provides bereaved family members, or those seriously injured and their caregivers, with a connection to a trained, volunteer peer support mentor. Our FSS mentors are all individuals who have been through similar experiences and are dedicated to helping others survive these life-altering tragedies.

Interested in becoming and/or being assigned a peer mentor? Please fill out our [peer mentoring form](#).

## *Logistical Assistance*

Our national [online resource guide](#) helps those personally impacted by traffic violence navigate the logistics after a crash. We prepared this guide because our members wished they had the information it contains when they experienced the unimaginable. As indicated in the guide, every crash is unique, and every jurisdiction is unique. We can't anticipate the myriad circumstances any individual may face across the country. But the guide provides a high-level overview, guides crash victims to key questions to ask, suggests resources to support them and helps them negotiate the medical, legal, and other bureaucracies that can be confusing, infuriating, and painful.

## *Communication Tools*

FSS's community hub using the Geneva platform encourages FSS members to support one another, share resources, and learn from each other to make change in their communities.

## *Support Services Principles*

Our support services follow these principles:

- **Hope:** Inspire and provide avenues to be hopeful

- **Opportunity:** Facilitate the opportunity to make meaningful choices and find a path forward
- **Listening:** Actively listen to members so they feel heard
- **Support:** Promote mutual support for each individual's grief journey

## **BUILDING YOUR COMMUNITY**

In addition to relying on our centralized support services, you will want to establish a locally close-knit group. When starting a chapter, new chapter organizers can learn from our experiences and access our abundant skills trainings, advocacy meetings, and communication tools. We encourage you to take advantage of these supports as you launch your new chapter or anytime.

We recommend beginning with small group gatherings, preferably in person when possible, to get to know each other's stories and establish a base of support. Many also value the connections made with others who know this loss/trauma, even when the focus is not on sharing grief and loss. A few community building ideas:

- Meet in person for a social gathering (e.g., a picnic, dinner, coffee meetings, etc.) – no agenda but just an opportunity to connect
- Take meals to families and/or start a meal train to new members
- Encourage going together to related events (group rides, open streets events, etc.) to encourage people to interact with each other outside of FSS activities

At this early stage, it's also helpful to reach out to a few key resources in your community, such as local organizations providing trauma support and listings of faith leaders. For some chapters, finding a legislative or policy change to mobilize in support of can be a purposeful way to unite a new chapter.

### *Recommended Guiding Principles*

Research into trauma-informed community building efforts shows that recognizing the complex and dynamic relationship between individuals and their environments can strengthen health and well-being. As with all our trauma-informed work, safety, empowerment, and healing are key. [Organizing Engagement, a project of the Nellie Mae Organizational Foundation](#), suggests that trauma can impair collaboration due to a lack of cohesion or trust; lack of stability, reliability, and consistency; inability to envision the future; disempowerment; and a high level of personal needs.

Learning trauma-informed strategies can help meet the needs and challenges in an FSS community. Here are some guiding principles:

*Individual:* Provide low barriers to entry; opportunities for consistent, frequent interactions and trust-building to build relationships; opportunities for self-determination, planning, a sense of accomplishment, and joy. Chapter leaders can establish a monthly or bi-monthly meeting, meet

with new members for coffee, and hold in-person gatherings like picnics to welcome new members and build community.

*Interpersonal:* Create safe spaces for interactions and sharing with opportunities for shared experience; integrate relaxation and mindfulness exercises and conflict management skills; and build mutual accountability and reliance. Every FSS engagement should be a safe space for our community.

*Community:* Frequent inclusive and consistent communication; cultivate formal and informal leadership opportunities; encourage participation; provide visible activities that reflect the community.

*Systems:* Ensure a high-capacity backbone institution to coordinate work – this can be part of the role of the sponsoring organization. Build strategic service partnerships with trauma-informed partners like social workers associated with your local trauma center or mindfulness practitioners focused on trauma-informed practices; establish clear partnership roles, responsibilities, and expectations.

*Self-Care:* Another important element is self-care: Starting a chapter is not easy, and fighting for systemic change is hard and takes time. Step back and rest when necessary. Delegate so that work doesn't depend on just a few people.

### *Suggested Activities*

We encourage you to use this list to create a foundation of support for your members:

- Guide your members to participate in our centralized support services described above.
- Establish in-person support community gatherings to supplement the virtual national groups. If your chapter becomes large enough, you may want to consider specialized groups for people who have lost a family member and people who have been injured, or for those who have lost a child or parent.
- Create online support and connection. This can be synchronous, for example in a Zoom meeting, or asynchronous, for example through a Facebook group.
- Ensure family members get the support:
  - Professional: Share this [tip sheet](#) to help members from a trauma-informed therapist.
  - Family and friends: Encourage them to share this [FSS tip sheet](#) for how best friends and family members can support crash victims and share our list of [Grief and Trauma Resources](#).
- Help family members navigate post-crash logistics. Offer to help members write a Victim Impact Statement, or accompany them to court if there is a hearing.
- Where appropriate, help create restorative justice processes in your community (described further below).
- Develop and provide links to mental health resources for your state or local area.

- Here are a few resources to help you create a welcoming, trauma-informed community:
  - [Relaxed breathing techniques](#)
  - [Grounding techniques to detach from emotional pain](#)
  - [Calming skills](#)
  - [Cultivating Resilience: Self Awareness Worksheet](#)
  - [A Blessing for the Journey](#) poem of encouragement

### *Driver Accountability & Restorative Justice*

As highlighted in the resource guide, most people who have lost a loved one or been injured are eager to hold the driver accountable. However, this can be very challenging and the current accountability options often feel insufficient. For many FSS members, they want meaningful accountability – an apology, restitution over and above an insurance payment, actions that show the driver is making amends such as compensation for funeral and burial expenses, publicly speaking out in favor of policy solutions to save lives, and more.

We encourage you to work to create a restorative justice program in your community to encourage meaningful accountability. Restorative justice has been called “a theory of justice that focuses on people, relationships, and healing, rather than the crime or offense, punishment and the law.” It incorporates the voices of people who have lost loved ones to traffic violence to jointly identify concrete steps the driver will take to make amends.

FSS and TA have supported the Center for Justice Innovation’s [Circles for Safe Streets](#) program to improve traffic safety and increase accountability.

## **13. CONCLUSION**

The growth and success of the FSS movement depends on reaching those affected by traffic violence and including them in strong and supportive FSS communities. Thank you for being an essential part of this work by building and sustaining your FSS chapter.

We hope this manual is helpful to you as you put your hands and hearts into this work. While this can be challenging, our strong community and the resources, tools, and guidance we provide can help you expand your base of support and accomplish change you never thought possible. Starting a chapter requires an investment of time and money from the sponsoring organization, but FSS is something that funders want to support. You not only have the opportunity to help prevent traffic deaths but to be a part of a growing national movement! Take the plunge. Join us. We are here to support you!

We continuously update the manual so please share suggestions and resources if there’s anything we missed!



*Acknowledgements: FSS and TA expresses its deep sorrow and gratitude to the many members of FSS who have shared their stories and joined us on this difficult journey. We are very grateful for the support of the staff at TA and FSS who have supported us on our journey, especially Thomas DeVito, Caroline Samponaro, Elizabeth Adams, Danny Harris, Bobby Preti, Aly Geller, Ana Theis, Alexis Sfikas, and Chana Widawski. Thank you to our writer for this manual, Alexandra Bowie.*

# APPENDIX

## TOOLKIT

We have developed sample letters, templates and resources to help you. All are located in our Toolkit designed to supplement this chapter manual [here](#) in this “Toolkit” folder – and also [familiesforsafestreets.org/ChapterManualToolkit](http://familiesforsafestreets.org/ChapterManualToolkit). You are able to download the documents and edit them as you wish.

### *FSS Letters, Templates & Resources*

Here’s a list of the templates and resources available for your to use (and all are referenced above in the manual):

#### Outreach

- Outreach Spreadsheet: [Template](#) to track outreach to hospitals and other organizations that come into contact with crash victims
- Outreach Presentation: Here are two samples you can modify and use from [New York City](#) and [San Francisco](#).
- Outreach Email Template: For [outreach to community organizations](#).
- Outreach Letter: [Sample](#) you can use to personalize and send to crash victims/survivors in your community.
- [FSS Tri-Fold Brochure](#)
- FSS Postcard: [Sample postcard](#).

#### Emotional Support Resources

- Grief and Trauma Resources: Share our [compiled list](#) of books, podcasts, and other resources with crash victims/survivors.

#### Governance & Meetings

- By-Law/Governance Guidelines: Sample [NYC Governance guidelines](#).
- Agenda: [Sample template](#) to help you plan your FSS meetings.
- Memorandum of Understanding: [Agreement](#) language used to create an MOU with the sponsoring organization required for starting a chapter.

#### Advocacy & Events

- Coalition letter: [Sample letter](#) to use as a guide to create your own for a specific advocacy campaign.
- [Event planning template](#) to help you plan events.
- [Advocacy Campaign checklist](#)
- [Press release template](#)

- Vigils: [Vigil planning checklist](#) and [sample run of show](#) to help you plan your vigil.

### Crash Signs

- Crash Signs: [Template](#) and [detailed instructions](#) to post at crash sites

### Communications

- E-newsletter: [Sample template](#) with [instructions](#) on how to create your own and use to send an e-newsletter to your chapter members.

- 

### Fundraising

- Donor Letter: [Sample letter](#) you can use.
- [Peer-to-Peer Fundraising Guide](#): Instructions and delineates FSS-National supports.

### *FSS Key Online Resources*

- Calendar: FSS-National calendar of support community events available [online](#).
- Current Chapters: [List](#) with their websites/social media links.
- FSS Membership Form: [Online form](#) so that crash victims/survivors can receive updates and be connected with members nationally.

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

Here are other resources available that are referenced in the manual as well:

These organizations are a good resource to obtain the most recent statistics on traffic injuries and deaths:

- Traffic Violence Statistics on Deaths and Injuries
  - [National Safety Council: Data](#)
  - [USDOT National Highway Traffic Safety Administration \(NHTSA\)](#) data reports and [Fatality Analysis Reporting System](#).
  - [Why NSC data is higher than NHTSA](#) (counts past 30 days and includes private roads)
  - World Health Organizations: Compiles [comparative country data](#) on roadways safety.
  - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD): [Compiles data](#) on OECD member countries on roadway safety.
  - BRAKE Roadway Safety: Also [analyzes data](#) comparing countries.
- World Day of Remembrance: Has information on WDoR, a detailed Organizer's Toolkit and examples of past events all on the [WDoR-USA website](#)
- Fundraising:
  - [How to approach a foundation](#)
  - [How to run an effective fundraising campaign](#) (Classy.org)



- [How to organize a 5K race](#)
- [Google ad grants](#)
- Speed survey: [Instructions](#) and more to conduct a speed survey in your community.
- Advocacy:
  - [Your City, Your Voice](#) trainings (see Sample training slides for campaign planning [here](#))
  - Advocacy Incubator's [Advocacy Action Guide: A Toolkit for Strategic Policy Advocacy Campaigns](#) are good resources
  - [Midwest Academy Strategy Chart](#)
  - [Advocacy Campaigns Checklist](#)
  - Data captures for members/activists
  - [Vision Zero Network](#)
  - [DOT Safe Systems approach](#)
  - [League of American Cyclists](#)
  - [Action Vision Zero](#)
  - [Campaign planning documents from Alliance for Biking & Walking](#)
  - [Communications training — “Battle of the Story”](#)
  - Traffic Injury Research Foundation report, [“Road Safety Campaigns: What the Research Tells Us”](#)
  - [NIH: ineffectiveness of education](#)
  - [Ineffectiveness of traffic stops](#)
- Governance: [Sources of governance guidance](#) to consider: [Robert's Rules of Order](#) to run meetings. Other chapters find Robert's Rules too formal. Another source to consider is [Martha's Rules](#), a less formal, agenda-focused approach to planning meetings. The New York City chapter has developed its own way of proceeding — see the link to the NYC chapter bylaws in the next section. In the New York City chapter, we recently updated our leadership structure and governance guidelines. You can find a copy [here](#).
- Support Community Resources:
  - [Relaxed breathing techniques](#)
  - [Grounding techniques to detach from emotional pain](#)
  - [Calming skills](#)
  - [Cultivating Resilience: Self Awareness Worksheet](#)
  - [A Blessing for the Journey](#) poem of encouragement
  - [Circles for Safe Streets](#) Restorative Justice program

### *How to Download Documents to Edit*

All of the sample letters and templates in the Toolkit are available to download and edit as you wish. To do so, go to [this folder](#) (or find the link above), open the document to the item you wish to download. In the file menu, select download and your preferred format such as Microsoft Word. See image below.

Sample Outreach Letter ☆ 📁 ☁

File Edit View Insert Format Tools Extensions Help

New ▶

Open ⌘O

Make a copy

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Share ▶

Email ▶

Download ▶

Approvals New

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Microsoft Word (.docx)

OpenDocument Format (.odt)

Rich Text Format (.rtf)

PDF Document (.pdf)

Plain Text (.txt)

Web Page (.html, zipped)

Epub Publication (.epub)

... of [chapter name] Families for Safe Streets, I am writing to  
 he loss of [victim's name/your son, father, etc]. Our family lost [na  
 rash in [date or other relevant info, e.g. if the crash occurred in a  
 ghsborhood or in a similar way to the family you are reaching out

## FSS STORIES

Some of our members have shared their stories so that you can understand the urgency of having faith leaders join the movement for safer streets. You are welcome to share any of their painful experiences in your Sermon for Safe Streets. We hope their testimonies will inspire you and your congregants to join with us and raise awareness about this preventable public health crisis. Additional stories are interspersed throughout this guide.

Revised 8/23/23

“

My 23-year-old daughter Ella was struck and killed by a careless bus driver as she crossed the street. She was a dancer, a musician, and an artist. She was a beautiful person, my daughter, and my best friend. Ella was so happy to be living in on her own after college – enjoying the energy, diversity and the food choices in the city. One day she hauled me into that supermarket down the street and proudly pointed out the ethnic food items in every aisle. She wanted to emulate her brother’s interest in cooking and insisted I help her purchase various food items so she could experiment – with varying results, I’ve heard.

So just as her neighborhood was inclusive of every background and lifestyle, so too does traffic violence not discriminate. There were three people killed at the intersection where Ella died in a three-year period year period – all from diverse backgrounds and circumstances but none of them were spared the repercussions of reckless driving, poor street design and lack of attention to street safety.

It did not seem to us that life would go on, or that it should. What has made it possible to go on is the kindness and help of our community, and the chance to help life go on for others. That is what we honor as members of Families for Safe Streets.

I ask you to do what you can. Even if it feels like a drop, believe that those drops become a multitude, an ocean. Together we can change our communities.

”

**KEN BANDES**

**MOTHER OF ELLA BANDES**



“

I shouldn't be here.

I shouldn't be alive. On July 3, 2015, I was run over by a double-decker sight-seeing bus while I was crossing the street.

There's a traffic video showing me in the crosswalk on a green light. There's another traffic video showing the driver of the bus speeding through a stop sign before plowing into me head-on. And there's a video on YouTube showing a river of my blood flowing the street.

As I rolled under the bus's wheels, I remember feeling grateful—grateful that my head was not under the wheels. I spent three months in the ICU having multiple surgeries.

The thing about traffic crashes is they don't discriminate. Everyone is at risk, regardless of race, class, religion or sexual orientation. Every person is at risk the moment you step out of a building. And trust me, none of you want to endure what I've gone through.

It took two months before I could stand. I had open wounds for more than a year. I still go to physical therapy twice a week, and I suffer from neuropathic pain that feels like someone is trying to cut off my toes with piano wire. And I'm one of the lucky crash victims.

I have remained grateful throughout this experience. I hope I can also be grateful to know that our movement is spreading... that we are building a national movement for change.

\*photo by William Farrington courtesy of The New York Post

”

DEVAN SIPHER

CRASH SURVIVOR



“

I lost my nine-year-old vibrant, funny, adorable and loving son Giovanni in a senseless car crash. He was the heart and soul of our family. He loved to dance and do crazy things to make us laugh. His smile and laughter were infectious.

After my son passed away, I couldn't even leave my house. It was very difficult, and likely will be for the rest of my life. I cry and I cry, sometimes I sit in my car and I don't want to go home. I miss Giovanni so much.

It has been very difficult for me to speak out. But I have to do this.

Why? Because I don't want any more children to die. It's inexcusable for a parent to bury his own son. It's unacceptable. I know that after I die, I will be with my son, and that knowledge gives me the relief I need to fight. I hope you will join with me in remembering those who have died and helping support an end to the epidemic of traffic violence.

”

**RAUL  
AMPUERO**  
FATHER OF  
GIOVANNI AMPUERO



“

My only child is dead.

Seth was our one and only and he was one of a kind. He did not follow where the path led. Instead, he chose to go where there was no path and leave a trail. Seth left his mark with his sweet, outgoing, quirky personality,

in his amazing art, and with his unique sense of style. When he had an idea of something that he wanted to do, be it his artwork, building something, creating and editing stop-motion animation shorts, going on a study abroad trip to Antarctica, or a stage production, he figured it out. Through perseverance, he would get it accomplished and usually in the most amazing ways.

Seth was excited about pursuing his dream of inventing and designing toys and creating a streetwear clothing line. He was a student at F.I.T. in their Toy Design department. He also had a job with a display company and had just installed the holiday windows at Lord & Taylor's on Fifth Avenue in NYC as well as the Hudson Bay Company in Toronto, Canada. He had been put in charge of a new account at Lincoln Center and had installed their 50th anniversary display.

Seth said of his artwork, “My inspiration for many of my pieces comes from everyday objects like fruits and vegetables. I try to infuse each piece with irony as well, so they are more than one-line puns. I try to give humor to my artwork as I see life as a place where we can enjoy all that is around us and have fun in whatever we do. I feel that there is no need to grow up and act like an adult if you don't have to. So, by making my work comedic, and in a way juvenile it keeps me from having to act my age.”

His work and his life were best summed up by the quote he always had at the end of his e-mails, which was a quote from the Muppet Movie by Jim Henson, “Life's like a movie, write your own ending. Keep believing, keep pretending.”

While on his way to work, in the crosswalk with the right of way, a reckless bus driver made a left turn, running over and killing him. He was just 22-years-old and exactly one month short of his 23rd birthday. I am sure this was not the ending to the movie of his life that he envisioned.

The loss of my child, my one and only, is a tragedy beyond belief. None of our efforts will ever bring him back to me, but I know we are preventing these tragedies from happening to others.

It gives meaning and purpose to my life now and is the most important thing I do.

”

**DEBBIE KAHN**

**MOTHER OF SETH KAHN**

