



WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF
LICENSING

Expanding Opportunities for Driver Training Instructors Report

ESHB 1878 Improving Young Driver Safety



Washington State Department of Licensing

Licensing, Endorsements, and Traffic Safety Unit

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ADA Accessibility

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Executive Summary

The Expanding Opportunities for Driver Training Instructors Report provides a multi phase strategy for expanding Washington’s driver training workforce through the Driver Instructor Training Solutions program. Mandated by Section 10 of ESHB 1878 (codified at [RCW 46.82.470](#)), this initiative recognizes that a robust and equitable driver education system is dependent on a standardized, scalable, and data-driven instructor development pathway. The DOL aims to create a sustainable infrastructure that can accommodate the expansion of mandatory training for young drivers by increasing the number of qualified instructors and by creating a more diverse and inclusive driver education industry.

Driver Instructor Training Solutions program implementation will follow a phased roadmap to expand the driver training instructor workforce by 2030.

- **Phase 1: Foundation and Alignment (2026)**
 - Draft guidelines for future grants, incentives, and education partnership programs.
 - Align instructor training requirements to ensure consistency between driver training schools and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).
 - Develop an evaluation plan to establish baseline metrics, assess program rollout, and track progress toward expanding instructor diversity.
- **Phase 2: Pilot and Refinement (Late 2026-2027)**
 - Roll out the Instructor Training Series Phase 2 Pilot in August 2026.
 - Assess pilot findings to optimize course curriculum and delivery methods.
- **Phase 3: Program Expansion (2027-2028)**
 - Recruit, onboard, and connect mentors to the DOL Mentor List for Instructor Training Series candidates.
 - Transition the Instructor Training Series curriculum into the DOL’s centralized Learning Management System.
- **Phase 4: Financial Incentives and Educational Partnerships (2028-2029)**
 - Launch funding programs to support diverse and new instructors in remote and high-need areas.
 - Formally connect driver training schools with high schools and higher education facilities.
- **Phase 5: Program Establishment (2030)**
 - Formally establish the Instructor Training Series, Mentor, Financial Incentives, and Educational Partnerships programs across the state.

Introduction and Background

Requirements

Section 10 of ESHB 1878 requires the DOL to establish the Driver Instructor Training Solutions program aimed at expanding education and instructor licensing opportunities for driver training school instructors. As part of the program, the DOL must:

- Develop and launch an instructor training program designed to provide high-quality training to driver training school instructors.
- Establish a mentorship program.
- Offer grants and financial incentives to increase industry accessibility and encourage a more diverse workforce within the driver training school industry.
- Collaborate with OSPI to align instructor licensing requirements.
- Create pathways for private driver training schools to partner with high schools, vocational-technical schools, colleges, or universities to allow private driver training instructors to use school facilities to teach traffic safety courses. (Courses would not be eligible for school credit.)

Purpose

The purpose of these initiatives is to increase educational opportunities for driver training school instructors and diversify the workforce within the driver training school industry. Section 10 of ESHB 1878 created programs that include the Instructor Training Series, the Behind-the-Wheel Mentorship Program, the grants and financial incentives program, the efforts to align instructor licensing alignments with OSPI, and facilitating partnerships between private driver training schools and high schools and higher education institutions. By creating these programs, the DOL aims to remove barriers for potential instructors and increase the number of qualified, licensed instructors available to provide traffic safety education across the state.

Program Logic Model

The following logic model is a conceptual blueprint that connects the legal requirements of RCW 46.82.470 to proposed program activities, outputs, and outcomes. It illustrates the pathways through which these program initiatives will work to achieve short-term and intermediate outcomes, as well as long-term impacts for traffic safety education in Washington. It is included as a foundational framework, offering a high-level overview of how the DOL plans to operate the program during this initial launch phase before more detailed metrics are established.

RCW Components

The legal driver mandates four specific components:

- **Component 2a:** Implement a comprehensive traffic safety education program to train driver training school instructors.
- **Component 2b:** Establish a mentorship program and offer specialized grants or financial incentives to encourage diversity within the driver training school industry.
- **Component 2c:** Collaborate with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to align instructor requirements and streamline the licensing process.
- **Component 2d:** Facilitate partnerships between private driver training schools and high schools, vocational-technical schools, colleges, or universities to enable private instructors to teach courses in school facilities.

Program Activities

To address the RCW components, the program will implement five core activity tracks:

- **Instructor Training Series:** Launch and evaluate the Phase 2 Pilot, transition to DOL's centralized Learning Management System (LMS), and establish the full program.
- **Mentorship:** Recruit mentors, distribute and maintain the mentor list, and establish mentee/mentor reporting requirements.
- **Financial Incentives:** Launch the grants and incentives program.
- **Alignment with OSPI:** Meet with OSPI to identify areas where DOL/OSPI training standards can align and develop an OSPI-specific module in the Instructor Training Series.
- **Educational Partnerships and Facility Use:** Facilitate partnerships that enable driver training instruction in school facilities.

Program Outputs

The activities will directly result in the following outputs:

- Increased educational opportunities for instructor training and new instructors.
- Increased number of qualified, licensed instructors available.
- Increased number of qualified, licensed instructors in high-need areas, including rural and Tribal locations.
- Aligned driver training instructor requirements between DOL and OSPI.
- Increased number of school facilities allowing driver training instruction.

Program Outcomes

The outputs lead to successive levels of meaningful change over time:

- **Short-Term Outcomes (1-2 Years)**
 - Simplified licensing pathway for applicants.
 - Increased traffic safety education language offerings available to students.
 - Increased number of students accessing driver training by utilizing existing school facilities.
- **Mid-Term Outcomes (3-4 Years)**
 - Increased number of students served in rural and high-need areas.
 - Grants and financial incentives actively draw new, diverse instructor candidates into the industry.
- **Long-Term Outcomes (5+ Years)**
 - Standardized, high-quality instructor development translates directly to safer novice drivers, reducing statewide traffic collisions.

Long-Term Impact

Ultimately, the short-, mid-, and long-term outcomes achieve the overarching goal of the program: to continue to transform Washington's traffic safety education system into a more sustainable model with a diverse workforce, improving the customer experience for Washington residents and making Washington roadways safer for everyone.

Instructor Training Series Program

Curriculum Development

In 2025, the DOL conducted the first pilot of the Instructor Training Series. The first pilot used a virtual classroom model, with candidates attending live virtual class meetings over the course of 10 weeks. This model requires a significant amount of staff time and resources. Therefore, the second Instructor Training Series pilot will transition to an online module format, allowing more instructor candidates to access the course while using less staff time and resources. This transition involves a comprehensive review of all previous content, feedback integration from pilot participants and industry partners, and refined materials for accuracy and clarity. By moving the content to an online environment, candidates will have the flexibility to complete the classroom training in a way that fits their schedule, while maintaining clear milestones and deadlines to ensure timely progress through licensing requirements.

Implementation Status

A second pilot is scheduled to start in August 2026. This 12-week pilot will serve as an operational test of the updated course delivered through online modules. Throughout the course, the DOL will gather data and user feedback to evaluate the effectiveness of the online format. Upon completion of the 12-week period, the DOL will conduct a thorough assessment and make any necessary adjustments.

High-Level Program Objectives

- Increase educational opportunities for instructors
- Increase the number of qualified, licensed instructors available

Mentorship Program

Mentorship Program Status

The DOL has completed the foundational framework for the Behind-the-Wheel (BTW) Mentorship Program, which is designed to integrate with the Instructor Training Series. This program addresses the practical component of instructor licensing by establishing a structured, field-based training environment in which aspiring instructors learn from qualified mentors. By creating a formalized system for mentor recruitment, oversight, and performance monitoring, the DOL ensures that the transition from classroom modules to supervised, in-vehicle training is consistent and high-quality across the state.

Progress on the Behind-the-Wheel Mentorship Program includes:

- Clear pathways for mentor qualification, prioritizing instructors with trainer endorsements or significant field experience. This approval process includes mandatory orientation and specialized training on the DOL's curriculum and documentation standards.
- To assist candidates in finding local training, the DOL will maintain a public-facing mentor list. The list will be managed internally. We will track compliance, performance trends, and license renewals, ensuring all active mentors remain in good standing.
- Reporting requirements are established, including mentee behind-the-wheel training hour logs, competency rubrics, and post-training surveys.
- To encourage participation and broaden the program's reach, mentors can earn continuing education credits for completing required training and submitting reflections after a training is completed.

High-Level Program Objectives

- Increase educational opportunities for instructors
- Increase the number of qualified, licensed instructors available
- Increase traffic safety education (TSE) locations in high-need areas
- Increase traffic safety education (TSE) language offerings

Financial Incentives and Diversity

Grants and Financial Incentives

The DOL is developing the framework to establish a financial incentive program specifically for the recruitment and retention of qualified driver training instructors in high-needs areas. The program aims to make traffic safety education more accessible across different languages and regions. Implementation is scheduled for DITS Phase 4.

Diversity Impact

As part of the program evaluation plan, the DOL will:

- Assess the program's influence on workforce diversity.
- Monitor instructor growth within high-need and rural communities.
- Track the impact on traffic safety education language offerings and locations in high-need and rural areas.

High-Level Program Objectives

- Increase educational opportunities for instructors
- Increase the number of qualified, licensed instructors available
- Increase traffic safety education locations in high-need areas
- Increase traffic safety education language offerings

Alignment with OSPI

Summary of meetings and work with OSPI

Through a series of strategic meetings, both the DOL and OSPI worked to identify areas where training standards can be aligned to create a more efficient pathway for educators. The primary achievement of this collaboration to date is a formal consensus regarding the Instructor Training Series. The DOL and OSPI agreed that the curriculum provided by the DOL in the online series meets the foundational classroom requirements for the conditional teaching certificate. The DOL agreed to add a module for OSPI candidates that covers WACs and RCWs that pertain to OSPI instructors only.

High-Level Program Objective

- Align driver training instructor requirements between the DOL and OSPI

Educational Partnerships and Facility Use

Partnership Overview

To address the need for greater access to driver education, the DOL will develop a framework to facilitate formal partnerships between private driver training schools and high schools, vocational-technical schools, colleges, or universities. This initiative will enable private instructors to use existing school facilities to provide training, making it more convenient for students to access high-quality instruction within their communities. While courses hosted on school grounds maximize student reach, they are designed as separate traffic safety courses and will not be eligible for academic credit. The DOL will facilitate these partnerships by serving as a central coordinator to bridge the operational gap between private driving schools and public educational institutions.

Facilities

Once the program is established, DITS program staff will track the number of courses taught in school facilities by private instructors by tracking active facility-use agreements and student enrollment numbers.

High-Level Program Objective

- Increase student access to driver training by using existing school facilities

Program Evaluation

Proposed Objectives and Evaluation Summary

As outlined in Phase 1, the DOL is developing a program evaluation plan to ensure the program is effective, equitable, and evidence based. During this phase and throughout implementation, the DOL will develop quantitative and qualitative data collection tools to monitor the effectiveness of the program and inform quality improvement efforts. Such tools will include:

- Pre- and post-program surveys
- Interview protocols
- Standardized administrative logs

Further development of the evaluation framework and data collection tools will occur in tandem with ongoing program design work throughout the proposed phases to ensure that

measurement tools remain relevant and responsive to any adjustments. The following proposed evaluation summary table (Table 1) maps the current program objectives to corresponding program initiatives and proposed evaluation questions.

Table 1. Driver Instructor Training Solutions Proposed Evaluation Summary

Objective	Program Initiatives	Proposed Evaluation Question(s)
Increase educational opportunities for instructors	Instructor Training Series program, Mentorship Program, financial incentives and diversity	EQ 1.1. Did the program create more educational opportunities for potential instructors? EQ 1.2. Did the program improve access to instructor training for candidates from historically underrepresented communities?
Increase the number of qualified, licensed instructors available	Instructor Training Series program, Mentorship Program, financial incentives and diversity	EQ 2.1. Did the program increase the number of DOL-licensed instructors available? EQ 2.2. Did the program increase the number of DOL-licensed instructors from historically underrepresented communities?
Increase traffic safety education locations in high-need areas	Mentorship Program, financial incentives and diversity	EQ 3.1. How did the program help the state address challenges to accessing traffic safety education in high-need areas?
Increase traffic safety education language offerings	Mentorship Program, financial incentives and diversity	EQ 4.1. How did the program help the state address challenges to accessing traffic safety education in languages other than English?
Increase student access to driver training by utilizing existing school facilities	Educational partnerships and facility use	EQ 5.1. Did the program increase student access to driver training in existing school facilities? EQ 5.2. How did students utilize these services?
Align driver training instructor requirements between the DOL and OSPI	Alignment with OSPI	EQ 6.1. Did the DOL and OSPI alignment to driver training instructor requirements improve the instructor licensing process?

Future and Next Steps

Goals and Strategic Priorities for the Upcoming Fiscal Year (2026-2027)

- The immediate priority is launching the Instructor Training Series Phase 2 Pilot in August 2026. Data from this cohort will be used to finalize the curriculum and course structure in preparation for full implementation in 2027.
- In 2027, implement the Mentorship Program and begin mentor recruitment.
- Create the OSPI module that addresses the WACs and RCWs that impact traffic safety education in public schools.
- Develop frameworks for creating a grants and financial incentives program and an educational partnerships program.
- Further develop the evaluation framework in tandem with ongoing program design work to ensure that measurement tools remain relevant and responsive to adjustments.