



New Jersey Crossing Guard Training Program 2023



RUTGERS

Edward J. Bloustein School
of Planning and Public Policy



2023 Program Summary

For over more than a decade, the New Jersey Safe Routes Resource Center at the Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center (VTC) at Rutgers University has been conducting research on crossing guard training and developing and implementing a statewide uniform, comprehensive Crossing Guard Training Program. With funding from New Jersey Department of Transportation, New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety, and Municipal Excess Liability Joint Insurance Fund of New Jersey (NJMEL), VTC continues to train and provide resources to crossing guards and their supervisors.

New Jersey has approximately 6,800 crossing guards. The training program has reached nearly 80 percent of the New Jersey municipalities that employ school crossing guards.

- In 2023, two trainings were held as webinars to accommodate more registrations than are typical for classroom training. The trainings were attended by 192 individuals representing 122 municipalities. Other attendees included a representative of the Essex County Police Office of Corrections and a representative of the NJ Bike & Walk Coalition.
- Since being made available on YouTube in 2015, the training video “Crosswalk Heroes” has had over 72,000 views. The Spanish language version of the training video has had over 2,500 views on YouTube.

- The Challenging Crossings training video has had over 7,100 views since it was introduced in 2019.
- The 2016 Crossing Guard Placement video has had over 1,500 views. Placement, and the decommissioning of crossing guard posts, continue to be important issues for officers.

The crossing guard supervisor train-the-trainer program continues to be rated “good” or “excellent” by the participants. Departments that have had supervisors attend the program in previous years send their new crossing guard supervisors to the training. Often, departments send several officers to the training.

Crossing guard supervisors are using the training presentation and video to train their guards, and are using other resources such as the model policy, the post observation report form, and the medical examination form.

The following document reviews results of the crossing guard supervisor pre-and post-training questionnaires and the pre- and post-training quizzes taken by the supervisors. Lessons learned, resources, and next steps are summarized.

2 Supervisor Training Sessions:

	Registered	Attended	Communities Represented
May 31, 2023 webinar	92	90	58
August 3, 2023 webinar	112	102	64
TOTAL:	204	192	122

- An officer attended from 11 towns that had not previously sent officers
- Departments that have previously sent supervisors have sent additional attendees or new supervisors
- Other attendees included:
 - A representatives of the Essex County Police Office of Corrections
 - A representatives of the NJ Bike & Walk Coalition



Supervisor Training Agenda

I. Crossing Regulations and Procedures

- a. Introduction
- b. Characteristics of Young Children
- c. Traffic Laws and Regulations
- d. Crossing Procedures
- e. Types of Intersections

II. Field Exercise

III. Crossing Guard Policies and Procedures

- a. Crossing Guard Placement
- b. Hiring, Training & Retraining
- c. Hazards and Incidents
- d. Orientation to Agency

IV. Presentation of Training Material



The Training

The following slides present a summary of the responses from the crossing guard training questionnaires completed at the two train-the-trainer classes held in May and August, 2023.



Summary Report

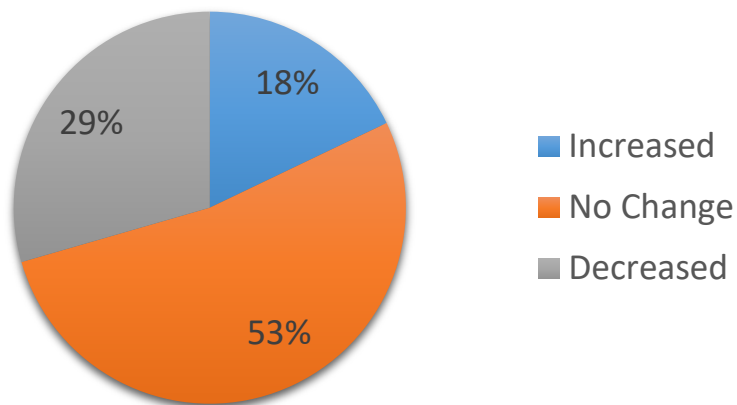
Crossing Guard Supervisor Pre-Training Questionnaire

Staffing

Question 1: How many crossing guards does your municipality currently employ? How many crossing guards do you believe are needed?

- Out of 96 participants, 92 participants responded this question
- 43% report that they have *too few* crossing guards
- 58% report that they have *enough* crossing guards or *more than enough*, which usually refers to the presence of substitute guards

Question 2: Have there been increases or decreases in your municipal crossing guard force in the past 3 years?



- New Jersey has over 6,800 crossing guards.
- 29% of departments saw a decrease in their force.

Policies

Question 3: Do you have official written municipal policy(s) regarding crossing guards about any of the following?

Policy Type	Responses (90)	Percentage
Hiring	63	70%
Duties	61	68%
Training	62	69%
Ability to meet physical demands (eyesight, hearing, etc.)	43	48%
Retraining	40	44%
Placement	42	47%
Discipline	40	44%
None of the above	19	21%

- Departments most often have policies relating to duties, training, and hiring, but fewer have policies related to retraining, placement, discipline, and medical requirements for the job.
- Our model municipal crossing guard policy is available on the NJ Crossing Guard webpage.

Crossing Guard Placement

Question 4: In your municipality, what is the most important factor determining the placement of crossing guards?

Factors	Responses (93)	Percentage
Proximity of school(s)	73	78%
Traffic volume	64	69%
Age of students	34	37%
Traffic study	25	27%
Pedestrian crashes	19	20%
Speed limit	18	19%
Number of lanes	12	13%
Vehicle turning movements	11	12%
Road width	9	10%
Engineer study	8	9%
Other	7	8%

- Main determinants for crossing guard placement are: proximity to school, age of students, and traffic volume
- Responses for other:
 - School Discretion
 - Limited busing
 - Number of walking students
 - Pedestrian traffic

Crossing Guard Placement

Signalized intersections?

Answer	Response	Percentage
Yes	74	77%
No	22	23%
Total	96	100%

A significant number of crossing guard posts are located at challenging intersections.

Signalized multi-lane intersections?

Answer	Response	Percentage
Yes	47	49%
No	49	51%
Total	96	100%

Unsignalized multi-lane intersections?

Answer	Response	Percentage
Yes	37	39%
No	57	61%
Total	94	100%



Crossing Guard Placement

Question 5: Are crossing guards placed for:

School Type	Responses (95)	Percentage
Public school students	95	100%
Private school students	21	22%
Charter school students	9	9%
Other types of students	4	4%

- All municipalities report placing crossing guards to help public school students.
- 22% percent of municipalities report providing crossing guards for private school students.
- Crossing guard placement should be based on safety needs at particular locations.



Crossing Guard Placement

Question 6: Do you provide crossing guards for:

- Most crossing guards are crossing elementary and middle school students, but over half are crossing high school students.
- Over half cross pre-k students, most likely accompanied by a parent.

Event Type	Responses (89)	Percentage
Elementary school students	85	96%
Middle school students	77	87%
High school students	52	58%
Pre-kindergarten students	47	53%
Community events	21	24%
Other types of schools or students	3	3%

Other types of schools or students:

School and Summer Camp, Library, Churches

Training

- Approximately 56% of new crossing guards receive two or more hours of classroom instruction as required by law.
- In general, returning guards receive less classroom training.

The train-the-trainer class encourages supervisors to bring all the crossing guards together for classroom training. Guards can discuss their experiences at their posts, learn new procedures and be reminded of required procedures.

Question 7: How many hours of classroom training do your **new** crossing guards receive annually?

Hours	Response	Percentage
2 hours or more	50	54%
Up to 2 hours	26	28%
Up to one hour	13	14%
Zero	3	3%
Up to ½ hour	1	1%
Total	93	100%

Question 8: How many hours of classroom training do your **returning** crossing guards receive annually?

Hours	Response	Percentage
Up to 2 hours	35	39%
2 hours or more	24	27%
Up to one hour	18	20%
Zero	8	9%
Up to ½ hour	4	5%
Total	89	100%

Training

Question 9: What classroom training materials do you use?

Respondents selected multiple answers.

73% of the municipalities are using materials from the NJ Crossing Guard Training Program.

Training Materials	Responses (84)	Percentage
NJ Crossing Guard Training Program material	61	73%
NJMEL (Municipal Excess Liability Joint Insurance Fund)	26	31%
AAA	17	20%
Materials developed in-house	17	20%
Other	8	10%
None of the above	5	6%

Training

Question 10: How many hours of field training do your **new** crossing guards receive?

Hours	Response	Percentage
Up to 10 hours	31	35%
20 hours or more	23	26%
Up to 20 hours	18	20%
Up to one hour	12	14%
None	4	5%
Total	88	100%

Question 11: How many hours of field training do your **returning** crossing guards receive?

Hours	Response	Percentage
None	45	52%
Up to one hour	32	37%
Up to 10 hours	5	6%
Up to 20 hours	3	3%
20 hours or more	2	2%
Total	87	100%

Only one-quarter of departments provide the required 20 hours of field training for new guards, and 4 respondents noted that their new guards do not receive field training. Training varies widely by department.

Training

Question 12: How do you conduct field training?

Answer	Responses (90)	Percentage
New guards are paired with several experienced guards at multiple posts	39	43%
New guards are paired with an experienced guard at one post	35	39%
Crossing guard supervisor is paired with new crossing guard at post	17	19%
Crossing guard supervisor monitors new crossing guards while in cruiser	14	16%
Other	13	14%
Field training is not conducted	2	2%

Some respondents chose multiple answers.

The majority of new crossing guards are paired with an experienced guard or guards for their required field training.

Other options included:

- Police officer
- Police officer paired, then senior crossing guard.

Training

Question 13: How often are crossing guards retrained in your municipality?

Answer	Response (86)	Percentage
Annually	72	84%
Retraining is not offered	6	7%
Other	4	5%
Only when laws or existing conditions change	4	5%
Every other year	1	1%
Several times per year	0	0%

Other: Starting this year, I will retrain every year.

- The majority of municipalities are retraining annually.
- Retraining refreshes crossing guards on:
 - Proper crossing procedures
 - Post routines
 - Counters the establishment of bad habits
- Gives guards the opportunity to talk about experiences on the post.

Training

Question 14: Who directs the training of your crossing guards?

Director	Response	Percentage
Municipal Police	85	84%
Other	9	9%
Senior-level or experienced crossing guard(s)	4	4%
Other municipal employee(s)	3	3%
Private company	0	0%
State Police	0	0%
Total	101	100%

The vast majority of crossing guards are trained by municipal police departments.

Question 15: Is your department engaged in any form of countywide or regional crossing guard training?

Answer	Response	Percentage
No	80	91%
Yes	8	9%
Total	88	100%

Most of the departments do not engage in countywide/regional training.

Note: Several county police academies provide direct training for crossing guards.

Orientation to Agency

Question 16: Are your crossing guards employed by:

Answer	Response (94)	Percentage
Municipality	93	99%
Other	1	1%
Private company	0	0%
School District	0	0%

- Most crossing guards are hired, trained and supervised by the municipal police. Each year, a few departments inquire about privatizing the crossing guard function.

Question 17: During what hours are your crossing guards stationed?:

Answer	Response (90)	Percentage
Morning hours	90	100%
Afternoon hours	90	100%
Lunch hours	21	23%

- All municipalities station their crossing guards during morning and afternoon hours.
- Nearly one-quarter of municipalities report stationing crossing guards during lunch hours.

Orientation to Agency

Question 18: What is the starting hourly rate for a new crossing guard in your municipality?

Answer	Response	Percentage
\$14.01 – \$18.00	36	41%
\$18.01 – \$20.00	22	25%
More than \$20.00 per hour	20	23%
\$12.01 to \$14.00	6	7%
\$10.01 to \$12.00	2	2%
\$7.25 to \$10.00	1	1%
Total	87	100%

Question 19: What is the highest hourly rate paid to crossing guards in your municipality?

Answer	Response	Percentage
More than \$20.00	30	35%
\$14.01 – \$18.00	27	32%
\$18.01 – \$20.00	21	25%
\$12.01 to \$14.00	5	6%
\$10.01 to \$12.00	1	1%
\$7.25 to \$10.00	1	1%
Total	85	100%

- In general, it appears that crossing guard pay has increased over the past several years. This change may reflect the increase in the NJ minimum wage, and/or the need to attract applicants.

Orientation to Agency

Question 20: Are crossing guards in your municipality members of a union?



Answer	Response	Percentage
No	64	68%
Don't Know	16	17%
Yes	14	15%
Total	94	100%

- 15% of municipalities have crossing guards who are members of a union.
- Unions may provide uniforms for their members.

Orientation to Agency

Question 21: Does your municipality provide uniforms, other than the safety vest, for your crossing guards?



Answer	Response	Percentage
No	40	43%
Yes, we provide uniforms	35	38%
Yes, we provide a stipend for the purchase of uniforms	11	12%
Other, please explain:	7	8%
Total	93	100%

Equipment offered varies by municipality.

Other

Vest, coats and rain jackets; all but pants and shoes

Orientation to Agency

Question 22: If your municipality provides uniforms or a stipend, what is required?

Answer	Responses (71)	Percentage
Safety Vest	68	96%
Rain gear	50	70%
Hats	38	54%
Gloves	30	42%
Shirt	25	35%
Pants	17	24%
Visible ID card	17	24%
Badges	12	17%
Shoes	8	11%
Other	7	10%

Other
Jacket
Stop Sign
Winter Coat



Uniforms assist in making crossing guards more visible, and more comfortable on the post. The safety vest is required.

Orientation to Agency

Question 23: What equipment does your municipality provide to crossing guards?

- The STOP paddle is required equipment for crossing guards.
- Whistle use has continued to increase among municipalities.
- Some departments provide orange cones to improve visibility at the crossings.

Answer	Responses (92)	Percentage
Hand-held STOP paddle	90	98%
Whistle	40	43%
Orange cones	29	32%
Movable safety signs	12	13%
Other	9	10%
Pole-mounted STOP paddle	2	2%
Ice melt	2	2%
Chair	0	0%
Shovel	0	0%



Orientation to Agency

- Most departments have crossing guards report directly to their supervising officer.
- In some departments, they are reporting to more than one person.
- Crossing guards need clear procedures for reporting incidents, hazards, or maintenance issues at their posts.

- The training emphasizes that maintenance of crosswalks and crossing post areas is a matter of *workplace safety*.
- Coordination with the municipal DPW may allow for prioritization of crossing guard posts for shoveling, sanding, pothole repair, etc.
- Coordination with the county or the state to address conditions on county or state roads can be challenging.

Question 24: To whom do crossing guards report incidents, hazards, or violations?

Answer	Responses (93)	Percentage
Police supervisor	72	77%
Dispatch	43	46%
Other	6	6%
School staff	5	5%
Public works	2	2%

Other

Crossing Guard Supervisor

Private Contractor Supervisor

Traffic Bureau

Orientation to Agency

Question 25: To whom do crossing guards convey job-related suggestions, comments, concerns, or complaints?

Answer	Responses (91)	Percentage
Police	88	93%
Municipality	6	7%
Other	4	4%
School district	2	2%
Private company	0	0%

Other
Crossing Guard Supervisor
Traffic Bureau

Question 26: What is the typical tenure of crossing guards in your municipality?

Years	Response	Percentage
Less than 1 year	3	3%
1 to 2 years	2	2%
2 to 5 years	27	31%
5 to 10 years	24	28%
10 to 15 years	17	20%
15 to 20 years	10	11%
20 or more years	4	5%
Total	87	100%

Orientation to Agency

Question 27: Does your department perform initial medical exams?

Answer	Response	Percentage
Yes	56	62%
No	34	38%
Total	90	100%

Question 28: Does your department perform regular age-based medical exams?

Answer	Response	Percentage
No	58	65%
Yes	31	35%
Total	89	100%

Question 29: Have any of your guards' suffered injuries on the job?

Answer	Response	Percentage
No	55	61%
Yes	35	39%
Total	90	100%

Summary Report

Crossing Guard Supervisor Post-Training Questionnaire

Orientation to Agency

- 136 training participants responded to the post training survey.
- Not every person answered every question.

- 77% of training participants considered themselves only *somewhat* or *not at all* familiar with the material presented.
- This reinforces the assumption that development and distribution of this training will benefit crossing guards.

Question 1: How familiar were you with the information presented before this training?

Answer	Response	Percentage
Somewhat	85	63%
Very much	32	24%
Not at all	19	14%
Total	136	100%

Question 2: How would you rate the training overall, i.e. did it accomplish what you expected and needed?

Answer	Response	Percentage
Excellent	100	74%
Good	34	25%
Fair	2	1%
Poor	0	0%
Total	136	100%

Training Materials

Question 3: How well did the training meet the following goals?

(ranked from 1 (low) to 5 (high))

Answer	1	2	3	4	5	Total responses
Provided a structure that is easily adopted for training crossing guards.	1	1	2	29	103	136
Provided information relevant to conditions in your community	1	2	5	32	96	136
Provided resources to improve crossing guard performance.	1	2	2	32	99	136



Training Materials

Question 4: Which of the following resources presented today will you use for your own training program?

Resources	Will Use	Will Not Use	Will Discuss with Supervisor	Total Responses
PowerPoint Training Slides for Crossing Guards	109	1	26	136
Field Exercise for Crossing Guards	97	4	34	135
Crossing Guard Tip Sheets	103	8	25	136
Crossing Guard Post Observation Report	82	8	46	136
Municipal Crossing Guard Policies	90	4	42	136
PowerPoint Segments	99	5	30	134
Training Video	114	2	20	136
Training Video - Spanish	50	48	37	135

Most of the participants will either use the training resources or they will discuss using the materials with their supervisor.

Training Session

Question 5: Are there any barriers to implementing any part of this training?

Answer	Response	Percentage
No	132	98%
Yes	3	2%
Total	135	100%

Question 6: Would you have spent more time on any of these modules?

Answer	Response	Percentage
No	129	96%
Yes	6	4%
Total	135	100%

Question 7: Would you extend your classroom crossing guard training past the two-hour time requirement?

Answer	Response	Percentage
No	106	78%
Yes	30	22%
Total	136	100%

Would you extend your classroom crossing guard training?

Depending on if I recognize that the new or existing guards need more training or refresher information.

Yes, to go over other procedures for time sheets, calling out and breaks with a breakfast offering.

If needed or necessary

Training Session

Question 8: Please share any other thoughts on the Crossing Guard Training Program:

All information given has been excellent and very useful.

A lot of great examples.

Crossing Guard Training Program was extremely informative. Learned some rules and training exercises that weren't previously implemented. I thank you

Excellent!

Good Training made simple specifically allowing all departments to use the same training portal

Great Class

Great Program

I training was very helpful and informative.

It covered everything that needs to be discussed about the crossing guards.

It was a very informative class, love the resources provided on the website

One of the better zoom classes I've been to. I learned things I didn't know I had to do

Solid training

The information giving to us has been very knowledgeable and we definitely will use it.

Very Good Program. Glad I went through it. I learned a few new things!

Very informative and time did not drag!

Very well run course. Appropriate amount of time spent on each subject.

Crossing Guard Quiz

Results	Pre-training	Post-training
Average Score	76%	81.0%
Number of “Don’t Know” Responses	71	2

- May 2023 class responded 100% correctly on one question on the pre-training quiz and two questions on the post-training quiz.
- August 2023 class responded 100% correctly on one question on the pre-training quiz and four questions on the post-training quiz
- Scores improved on all questions.
- Scores improved dramatically on questions addressing modes of communication with pedestrians and with drivers.

Crossing Guard Quiz

As has been the case in previous years, the percentage of correct answers for the two questions below increased from pre- to post-training, but remained the most confusing to participants:

- A crossing guard should use only words, and a head nod, to communicate with pedestrians. (correct answer: true)
- Crossing guards use only the STOP paddle and an outstretched hand to communicate with drivers. (correct answer: true)



Direct Crossing Guard Training in Underserved Communities

Direct Crossing Guard Training

In-person crossing guard training was conducted in:

- City of Passaic – August 25, 2023, 60 guards
- Trenton – August 30, 2023, 70 guards

These cities were chosen from the list of municipalities identified by the following:

- *NJ 2020 Strategic Highway Safety Plan_Equity Approach and Parameters*
- Rankings of communities in 2021 NJDHTS Highway Safety Plan for pedestrian crashes and bicycle crashes
- Equity analysis maps and lists to identify underserved communities
 - US EPA Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool
 - NJ Department of Community Affairs Targeted Urban Municipalities designation
 - NJ Department of Environmental Protection Overburdened Communities list

In City of Passaic, almost all the guards speak Spanish as their first language. The Rutgers-VTC representative presented the material in English and the crossing guard supervisors translated as needed. The Spanish voiceover version of the Crosswalk Heroes video was shown in Passaic.

Lessons Learned


Lessons Learned - Webinar Training

- Webinar trainings began in 2020 with increased attendance over the prior year. The 2022 trainings saw increased attendance and attendance increased again for 2023.
- Online training remains effective for increasing registration and participation. While it remains difficult to monitor engagement in an online format, participants have become more comfortable with the Zoom platform and interacting via the chat box.


Crossing Guard Training the Trainer #2 (8.13-2020) Zoom Recording

Why We Need Crossing Guards

Children are encouraged to walk and bike to school, but their limitations expose them to risks.



Catherine Bull
Program Coordinator
NJ Crossing Guard Training & Resources



Lessons Learned – Crossing Guard Tenure

- Though there was an increase of reported long-term crossing guards, communities continue to report having trouble finding people who want to be crossing guards or who qualify to be crossing guards. The majority of crossing guards in New Jersey continue to be newer to the position.
- Police Departments are exploring privatizing the hiring/ training/ supervision of crossing guards.
- Police Departments are requesting information on crossing guard post placement and decommissioning posts.

Training Year	2-10 years	10-15 years	15-20 years
2014	43 %	20%	32%
2015	49%	28%	19%
2016	68%	19%	10%
2017	71%	6%	20%
2018	73%	11%	13%
2019	64%	15%	18%
2020	72%	17%	11%
2021	64%	21%	6%
2022	63%	21%	6%
2023	60%	21%	10%

Lessons Learned – Communication

Comments from crossing guards during direct training included:

- Parents, older students, middle school students, teachers and school bus drivers do not pay attention to the instructions of the crossing guard.
- Guards felt disconnected from the school.

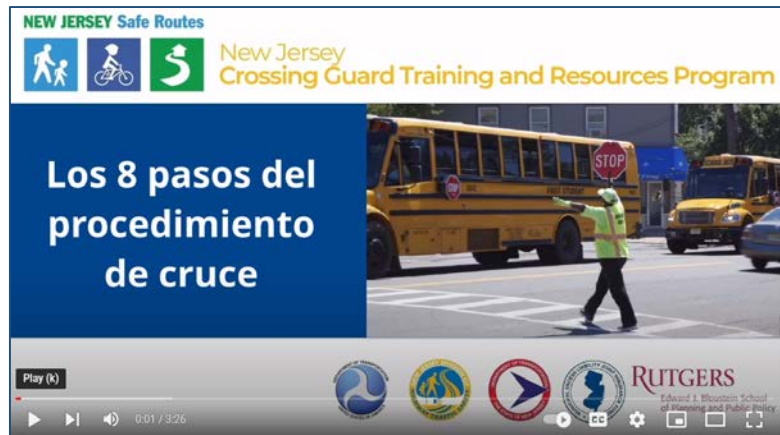
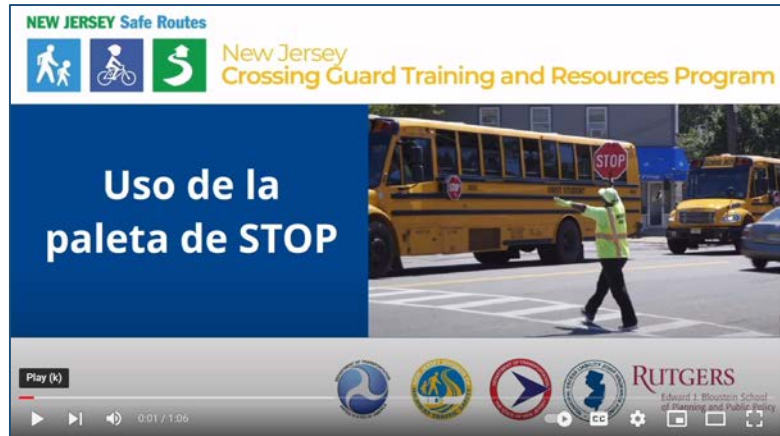
A way to get the word out is needed.

- More contact with school administration could be beneficial
- Communication to parents and teachers through the school
- Communication through the transportation office to the drivers of the school buses

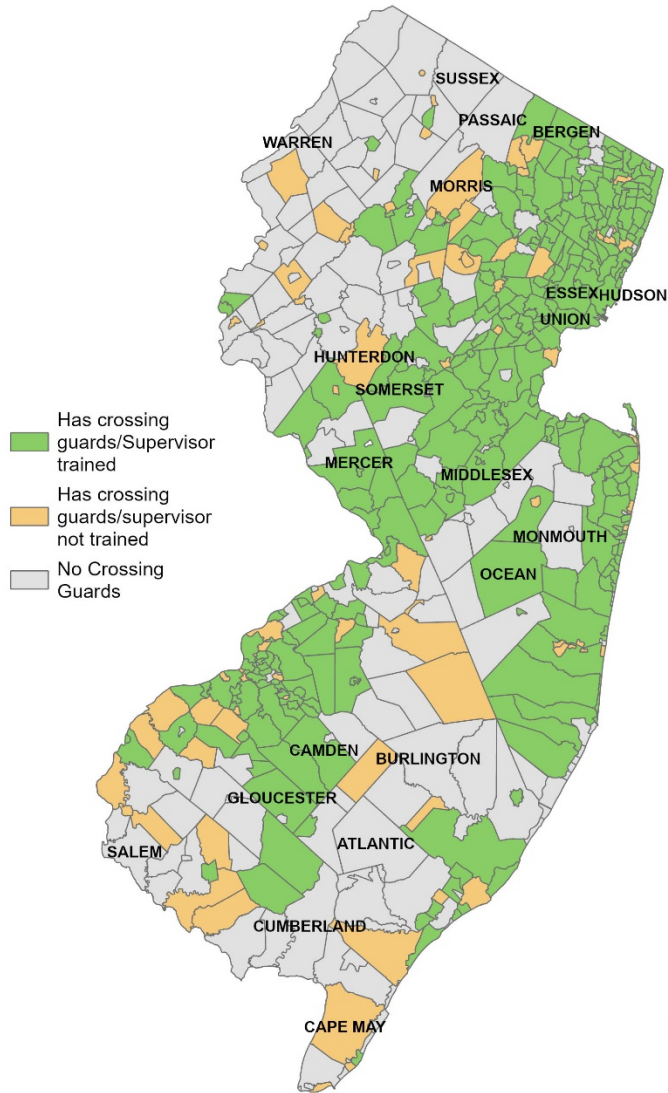


Lessons Learned– Spanish-language Resources

- Nearly forty percent of police departments noted that they will use the Spanish language voice-over version of the crossing guard training video, and twenty-seven percent will talk to their supervisor about using this resource.
- Rutgers-VTC provided Spanish versions of *Use of the STOP Paddle*, and *8 Steps of the Crossing Procedure* videos
- More Spanish-language resources continue to be needed.



Crossing Guards Supervisors Trained in New Jersey 2023



County	Number of Crossing Guards (estimated)
Bergen	1209
Essex	714
Hudson	688
Middlesex	580
Union	579
Monmouth	457
Camden	452
Passaic	360
Morris	296
Burlington	265
Gloucester	261
Mercer	185
Ocean	178
Atlantic	168
Somerset	142
Warren	110
Cumberland	69
Sussex	63
Hunterdon	43
Salem	38
Cape May	14
Total	6871

*Crossing guards data represents what has been reported to the New Jersey Safe Routes Resource Center as of August 2023

Over the more than 10 years that the NJ Crossing Guard Train-the-Trainer course has been offered, supervisors from 340 municipalities have been trained. The training has reached nearly 80% of the municipalities that have crossing guards.

Over the years, municipalities have sent multiple officers to the training, as well as new supervisors as they take on the supervisory role.

Thank You!

Our Partners

- NJ Department of Transportation
- NJ Division of Highway Traffic Safety
- Federal Highway Administration
- NJ MEL
- AAA
- NJ Department of Health, Division of Occupational Safety & Health (OSHA)
- HTSPAC
- NJPTOA
- County and regional police academies

