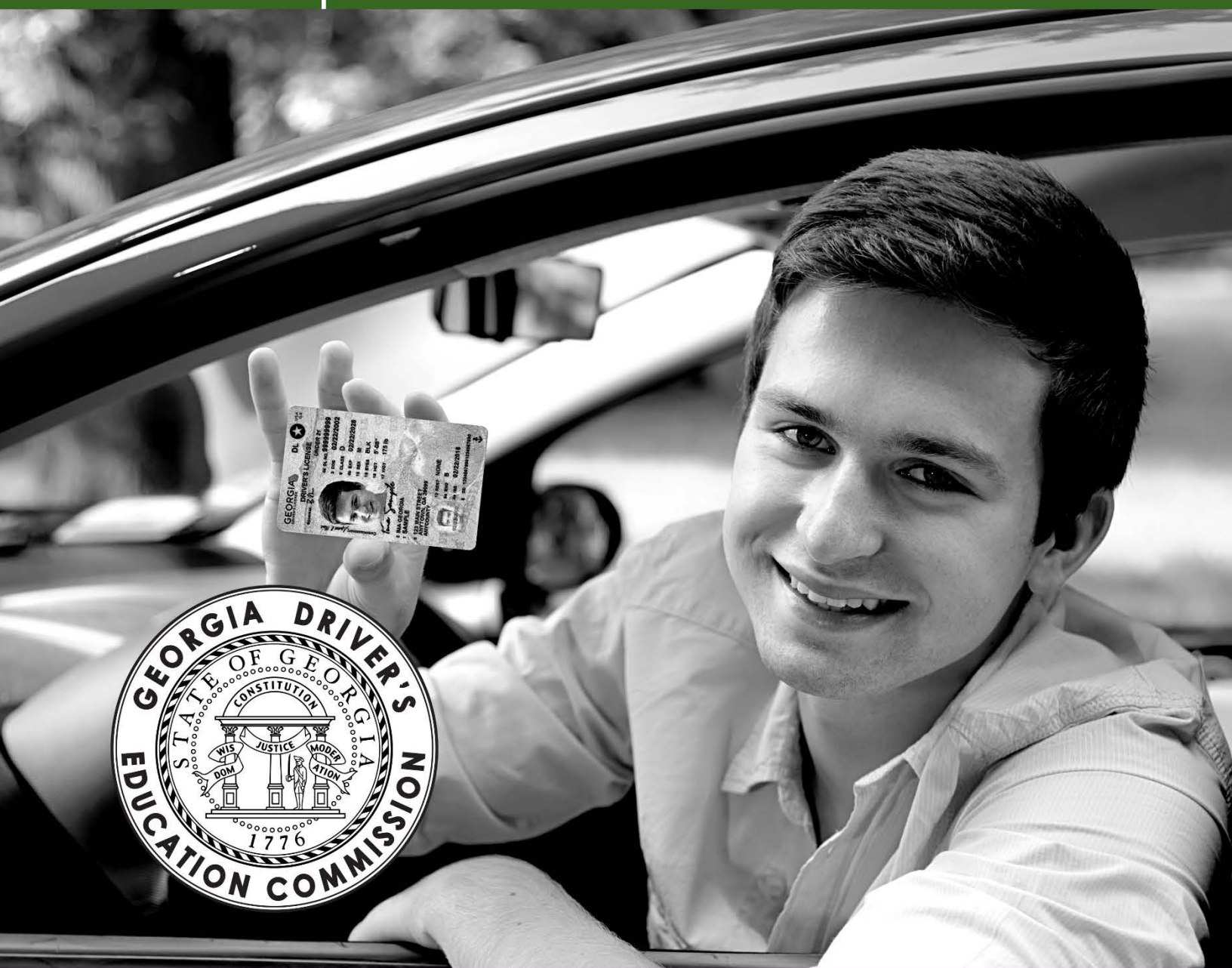


FISCAL YEAR
2021

GEORGIA DRIVER'S
EDUCATION COMMISSION

ANNUAL REPORT



Georgia Driver's Education Commission

In accordance with O.C.G.A. § 15-21-181(b), the Georgia Driver's Education Commission (GDEC) submits this report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House, and the committee chairpersons for the standing committees in the Senate and House of Representatives that are assigned issues related to motor vehicles. This report contains data on the amount of funds collected from the additional penalty imposed on traffic citations for driver's education for the previous three fiscal years, the amount of such funds appropriated to the commission for each corresponding year, and the manner and purposes for which such funds have been expended.



MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Georgia Driver's Education Commission is to maximize participation in driver's education and training to reduce motor vehicle crashes by making driver's training accessible and affordable to all Georgians.



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Commission Composition

Pursuant to O.C.G.A § 15-21-173, the Georgia Driver's Education Commission consist of eight (8) members who can serve four years terms. The State Board of Education shall appoint one member of the commission and the Department of Driver Services shall appoint two members of the commission. The director of the Governor's Office of Highway Safety shall appoint one member of the commission. The remaining four members of the commission shall be appointed by the Governor, two of whom shall be public school driver's education providers and the other two shall be private driver's education providers. The Governor shall designate a chairperson of the commission from among the appointed members.



Allen Poole, Chairman

Director

Governor's Office of Highway Safety

Appointed by the Governor's Office of Highway Safety



Spencer R. Moore, Vice Chairman

Commissioner

Department of Driver Services

Appointed by the Department of Driver Services



Malika Reed Wilkins

Sr. Principal, Transportation Marketing Manager

Atlanta Regional Commission

Appointed by the Department of Driver Services

Five (5) Vacancies

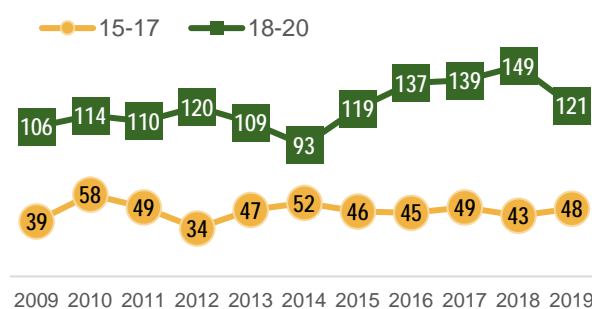
- One (1) appointed by the State Board of Education
- Two (2) appointed by the Governor representing public driver's education providers
- Two (2) appointed by the Governor representing private driver's education providers

Problem Identification

According to the Georgia Young Adult Drivers Traffic Safety Facts¹, there were 169 young drivers (15-to-20 years of age) involved in fatal crashes on Georgia roadways in 2019. This is a 12 percent decrease (23 less young drivers) since the previous year. This does not imply that young drivers caused the crash either by their actions or failure to act. In 2019, the top three contributing factors of fatal crashes involving young drivers were: (1) Failure to yield right of way; (2) Operating the vehicle in an erratic, reckless manner; and (3) Following improperly.

In 2019, young drivers represented 8 percent of all drivers all drivers involved in fatal crashes – a slight decrease in comparison to previous years. Over the past decade, the majority of young drivers involved in fatal crashes were 18-to-20 years of age (Figure 1, squares icons). In 2019, 72 percent of all young drivers involved in fatal crashes were in the 18-to-20 age group. The number of 18-to-20 years old drivers decreased by 19 percent from 149 drivers in 2018 to 121 drivers in 2019.

Figure 1. Number of Young Drivers (15-to-17 and 18-to-20 Years) Involved in Fatal Crashes



Source: Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) 2010–2019

In 2019, there were 73,936 crashes that involved young drivers in Georgia. The top contributing factors for all motor vehicle crashes involving young drivers were: (1) following too close; (2) operating vehicle in erratic manner (e.g., speeding); and (3) driving while distracted². In 2019, 56 percent of all young drivers involved in a traffic crash were confirmed or suspected of distracted driving. According the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention³, teens are at a higher risk of being in a motor vehicle crash compared to any other age group. This fact also holds true for Georgia where the overall rate of young drivers involved in fatal crashes was among the highest compared to other age groups. In 2019:

- 228.6 out of every 100,000 crashes involving drivers ages 15-to-20 were fatal
- 26.8 out of every 100,000 licensed drivers ages 15-to-20 were involved in a fatal crash
- 19.1 out of every 100,000 Georgia residents ages 15-to-20 were involved in a fatal crash

Fortunately, teen and young driver motor vehicle crashes, injuries, and fatalities are preventable and there are proven strategies that can improve the safety of young drivers on the road through effective driver's education. While our highway safety partners across Georgia will focus on other techniques to reduce injuries and fatalities on our highways, fostering and facilitating strong driver's education remains a paramount and effective component in the fight to reduce crash injuries and fatalities among young Georgia drivers.

¹ Georgia Crash Outcomes Data Evaluation System. (2021, September). Young Adult Drivers: 2019 data. (Georgia Traffic Safety Facts). Atlanta, GA: Governor's Office of Highway Safety.

² Distracted driving includes texting, talking on hands-free device, talking on hand-held device, other activity-mobile device, occupant distraction, other interior distraction, or other exterior distraction.

³ "Teen Drivers: Get the Facts." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 30 Oct. 2019, www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/teen_drivers/teendrivers_factsheet.html.

Young Driver Licensing

The Teenage and Adult Driver Responsibility Act (TADRA) was enacted on July 1, 1997. TADRA established a Graduated Driver's License program for young drivers ages 15-to-18 in Georgia. The law significantly changed the way young motorists earn and maintain the driving privileges (Provisional License, Class D).

The methods available to young drivers to obtain their lincese includes a combination of 30-hour course instructions, behind-the-wheel training, supervised driving, and use of the Parent Teen Driving Guide. These methods are designed to gradually introduce young drivers to Georgia roadways and reduce high-risk driving situations. Young drivers can obtain their license using any of the four methods described below.

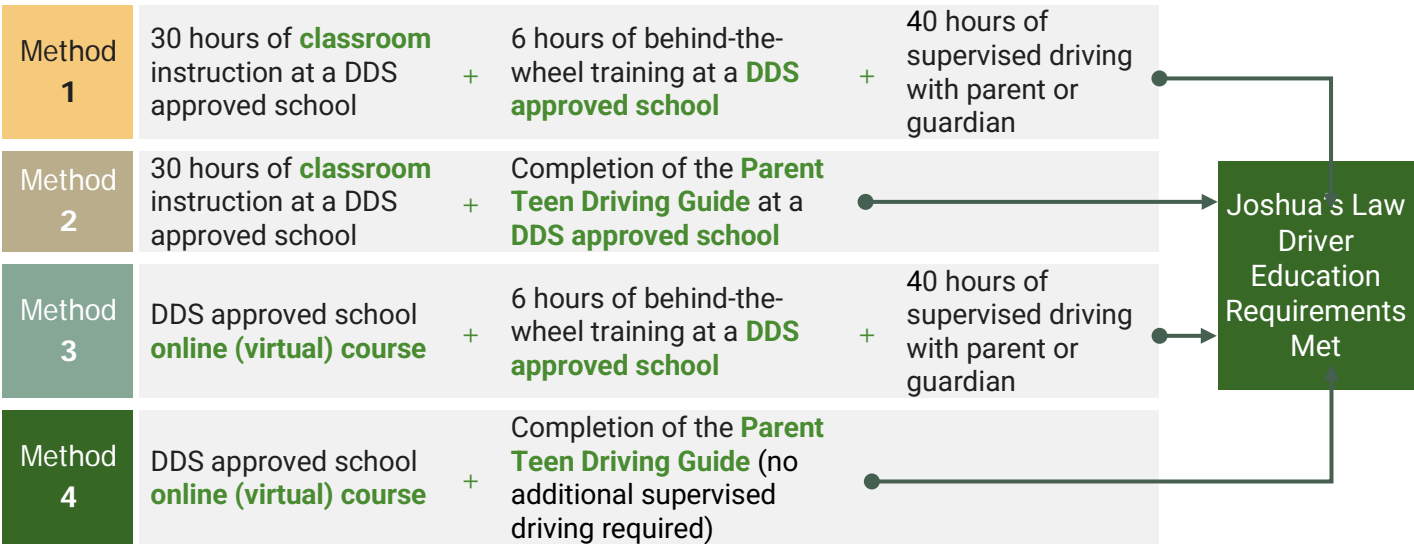


Figure 2 shows the how young drivers obtained a Provisional License (Class D) across the various methods in FY2021. Despite, the public health responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, the distribution remained the same as in previous fiscal years.

- **10.5** out of every 20 young drivers (53%) used Method 4
- **7.5** out of every 20 young drivers (37%) used Method 1
- **1** out of every 20 young drivers (5%) used Method 2
- **1** out of every 20 young drivers (5%) used Method 3

According to the Georgia Driver's Education Commission's research study of Joshua's Law, young drivers that use **Method 1** to complete the GDL requirement **demonstrated better and safer driver outcomes** in comparison with the other methods. These young drivers had fewer crashes and crashes with serious injuries or fatalities compared to other young drivers that completed the GDL requirement using other methods.

Figure 2. FY2021 Class D Licenses Issued by GDL Method (July 2020- June 2021)

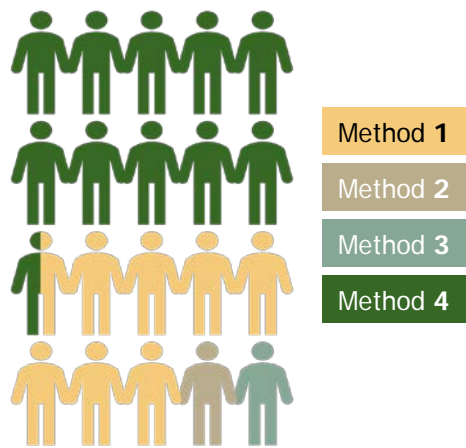


Figure 3 shows the percent of young adults (15-to-20 years old) with an instructional permit, Class D provisional license, or Class C license by county. Young drivers generally obtain their licenses for the first time under a Graduated Driver Licensing program as they learn driving skills.

- There were 8 million licensed drivers in Georgia in 2019. Young drivers (ages 15-to-20 years old) accounted for **7.9 percent (631,790)** of all licensed drivers in 2019.
- Across the state, **71 percent** of all youth (ages 15-to-20 years old) held either an instructional permit or driver's license in 2019.
- The percentage of young adults that held an instructional permit or driver's license in rural counties (**77 percent**) was higher compared to young adults in the Atlanta region or other urban counties⁴ (**70 percent**).

Figure 3. Percent of Young Adults (Ages 15-to-20 Years) with an Instructional Permit, Class D Provisional License, or Class C License⁵ by County, 2019

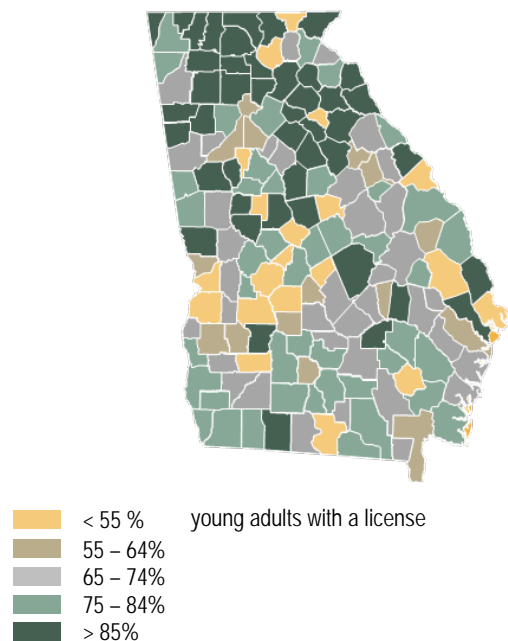
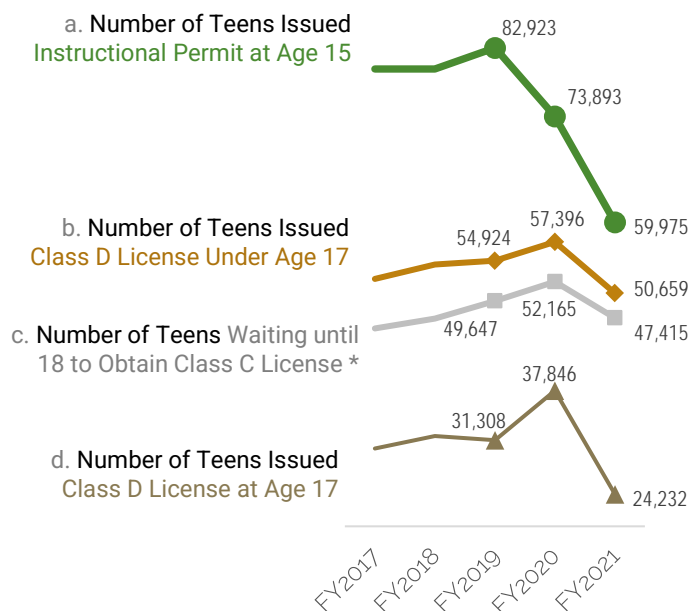


Figure 4 compares the types of licensing obtained across various age groups between FY2017 and FY2021. Between FY2020 and FY2021:

- The number of teens issued an instructional permit at age 15 **decreased by 19 percent** (Figure 4a, circle icons).
- The number of teens issued a Class D license under age 17 years **decreased by 12 percent** (Figure 4b, diamond icons).
- The number of teens (16-17 years) waiting until 18 to obtain a full license (Class C) **decreased 9 percent** (Figure 4c, square icons).
- The number of teens issued a Class D license at age 17 years **decreased by 36 percent** (Figure 4d, triangle icons).

Figure 4. Young Driver Age by License Type (FY2017 - FY2021)



Note: Vertical axis is drawn to scale

* Class C licenses are not required to complete driver's education

⁴ Rural counties are counties that have a residential population less than 50,000 persons. This is different than roadway classifications where urban road systems can be located in urban clusters (or metropolitan areas) of at least 2,500 persons within the rural counties.

⁵ Source: Drivers licenses information obtained from the Department of Driver Service (Dec 2019); Estimated young adult population obtained from Georgia's Online Analytical Statistical Information System (OASIS)

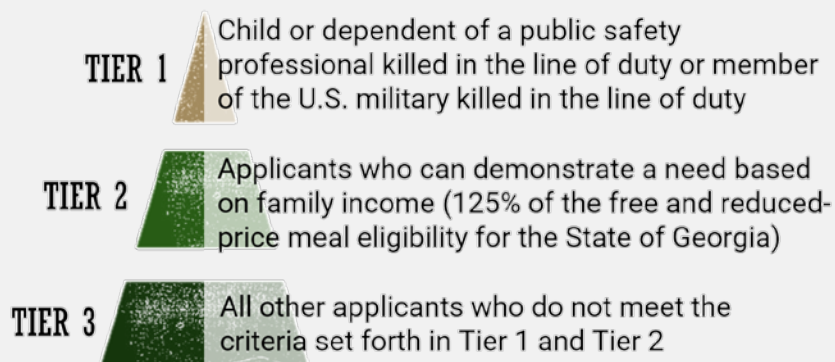
Commission History

The timeline below describes the key historical milestones and events since the creation of the Georgia Driver's Education Commission (GDEC) in 2005.

-  **JOSHUA'S LAW CREATES GDEC (2005)** Senate Bill 225 (2005), known as Joshua's Law, created the Georgia Driver's Education Commission (GDEC) for the purpose of recommending to the Governor and General Assembly changes in state programs, statutes, policies, budgets and standards relating to the provision of driver's education and training. Since its inception, the GDEC has worked to identify options for teen drivers to satisfy the driver's education requirements mandated by state law for young Georgians. Joshua's Law created a surcharge on all traffic citations in Georgia (originally 5 percent, now 1.5 percent), to establish funding to support driver's education programs throughout Georgia.
-  **GOHS FACILITATES ALLOCATION OF GDEC FUNDS (2007)** In April of 2007, through an agreement between the Georgia Department of Driver Services and the Governor's Office of Highway Safety (GOHS), GOHS facilitated the allocation of the GDEC funds by way of grant funding to support driver's education programs. During fiscal years 2007 through 2010, 58 programs received grant funding to create or support existing driver's education programs at public schools and libraries.
-  **GDEC TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED (2011)** In fiscal year 2011, the grant program was suspended due to lack of budget appropriation during the economic recession. The surcharge on traffic citations continued to be collected and appropriated to the State's general fund.
-  **SENATE BILL 231 REDUCES SURCHARGE COLLECTION (2013)** During the 2013 legislative session of the Georgia General Assembly, Senate Bill 231 extended the sunset of the GDEC until June 30, 2016 and reduced the amount of the surcharge collection from 5 percent to 1.5 percent.
-  **BUDGET APPROPRIATIONS RESUMED (2015)** Budget appropriations resumed to the Commission in Fiscal Year 2015 and the Commission has since provided training to over 21,000 Georgia students. After budget appropriations resumed, the Commission continued support of existing driver's education programs at high schools and executed a contract with the Technical College System of Georgia to establish a scholarship program for driver's education.
-  **HB 806 ASSIGNS GDEC TO GOHS (2016)** HB 806 during the 2016 legislative session extended the sunset to June 30, 2019 and assigned the GDEC to the GOHS for administrative purposes.
-  **GDEC STARTS THE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM (2017)** In fiscal year 2017, the Commission suspended the support of driver's education programs and launched the Georgia Driver's Education Commission Grant Scholarship Program in March of 2017. The program, open to public (public high school, technical colleges, universities, and other state-owned driver education programs) and privately owned (commercial, for-profit driving schools and non-profit organizations, and private schools) awards driver's education grant scholarships to students ages 15-to-17 years old who seek to complete a 36 hour (30 hours of classroom instruction and 6 hours of behind the wheel instruction with an approved instructor) driver's education program (Method 1). The Georgia Driver's Education Grant Scholarship Program was continued in fiscal years 2018 to 2021.

GDEC SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM SELECTION PROCESS

Scholarships are awarded on a tiered priority system. First priority (Tier 1) is given to grant scholarship applicants who are a child or dependent of a public safety professional or member of the United States military killed in the line of duty. Second priority (Tier 2) is given to scholarship applicants who can demonstrate a need based on family income (financial need eligibility is based on 125 percent of the free and reduced priced school meal eligibility for Georgia). Third priority (Tier 3) is given to all applicants who do not meet the criteria set forth in Tier 1 and Tier 2 outlined above.



PRIORITY TIERS GDEC Scholarship Program Selection Process

All of the applicants in Tier 1 are awarded before the second priority applicants; and all Tier 2 applicants are awarded before Tier 3 applicants are awarded a grant scholarship. If more grant scholarship applications are submitted than grant scholarships available in each tier, grant scholarships are awarded using a computer-generated random selection method from the priority level applications. Grant scholarships are evenly distributed among Georgia's United States congressional districts to ensure that all Georgians are considered despite geographical location.



"The instructor for the Driver's Education course was great. My instructor encouraged me and gave me more confidence to be a safer driver especially during the ride along portion of the program."

- Jackson (Fitzgerald, GA)

Fiscal Year 2021 Activities

July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021

SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

In fiscal year 2021, 8,738 applicants applied for the Georgia Driver’s Education Grant Scholarship program and the Commission awarded 5,380 driver’s education scholarships. Six out of every ten applicants were awarded a scholarship in fiscal year 2021. Compared to the 2020 fiscal year, the number of scholarships awarded increased by 7 percent. Of the 5,380 scholarships awarded, 594 students forfeited scholarships or chose not to complete driver’s education through an authorized provider in the program. The remaining 4,786 students (89 percent) who redeemed their driver’s education represents a value of \$2,045,268.47 paid in driver’s education grant scholarships.

Despite the statewide impacts caused by the COVID-19 pandemic experienced between FY2020 and FY2021 and the 11 percent decreased in appropriated funding for FY2021, the Georgia Driver’s Education Commission experienced a 5 percent increase in the number applications, 7 percent increase in the number of applicants awarded a scholarship, and 10 percent increase in the number of awardees redeeming their driver’s education scholarships.



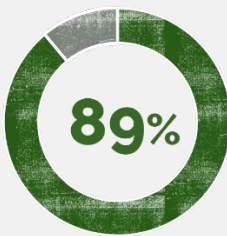
6 out of 10 applicants
were awarded a scholarship in FY2021



Scholarships
awarded through the
GDEC Scholarship
program



Student scholarship
recipients compared
to FY20



Students redeemed
their scholarships at
an authorized
provider
(4,786 out of 5,380
students)



Awarded in driver’s
education grant
scholarships

GDEC EVALUATION

In FY2021, GDEC procured third-party researchers and consultants to examine the effectiveness of the GDEC scholarship program and to provide recommendations for potential areas for programmatic improvements. There were four primary research objectives, focusing on differences in driving incident outcomes (e.g., crashes, serious injuries, fatalities, convictions, accumulated points on driver's license) across:

1. GDEC drivers and other young drivers;
2. Provider types used by young drivers to receive driver's education;
3. Methods used to complete driver's education requirements; and
4. Individuals waiting until 18 years of age to obtain a full license and younger drivers who go through the GDL process.

The Evaluation Summary is available online (www.gahighwaysafety.org/gdec/) and the key findings are summarized in the table below.

GRANT SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM & JOSHUA'S LAW EVALUATION HIGHLIGHTS

① Differences among GDEC drivers and other young drivers

GDEC drivers experienced significantly fewer crashes per year and slightly higher Road Skills Test scores compared to their counterparts.

② Differences among provider types used by young drivers to receive driver's education

The type of provider used to receive the driver's education instruction (i.e., technical colleges, high schools, and private/commercial providers) did not have any significant impact on driving outcomes among young drivers.

③ Differences among methods used to complete driver's education requirements

Method 1 had safer driver outcomes compared to the other three methods that can be used to satisfy Joshua's Law. Method 1 drivers had significantly:

- **Fewer convictions** than drivers who used all other methods,
- **Fewer crashes** than those in Method 2 and Method 4, and
- **Fewer serious injuries and traffic fatalities** from crashes than those who used Method

Drivers who had behind-the-wheel training with an approved instructor (Method 1 and Method 3) were involved in fewer crashes, serious injuries, fatalities, and convictions than those who did not receive this training.

The evaluation findings indicate the following ranking of each method:

- **Method 1:** Classroom instruction with behind-the-wheel instructor hours
- **Method 3:** Online instruction with behind-the-wheel instructor hours
- **Method 2:** Classroom instruction with Parent/Teen Driving Guide
- **Method 4:** Online instruction with Parent/Teen Driving Guide

④ Differences among delayed individuals waiting until 18 years of age to obtain a full license and younger drivers who go through the GDL process

Delayed drivers (those who received their license after turning age 18) tended to be involved in significantly fewer crashes, serious injury crashes, and fatal crashes; however, they experienced significantly more convictions compared to the young drivers who receive their provisional license through the GDL process.

CHALLENGES IN FY2020-FY2021

In March 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a worldwide pandemic, and the first detected case of COVID-19 in the state of Georgia was on March 2, 2020. The measures taken to control the spread of the virus greatly impacted the GDEC Driver's Education Scholarship Program and resulted in significant changes in when and how providers administer the driver's education curriculum and training in FY2020 and FY2021.

In FY2021, GDEC providers reported a backlog of scholarship recipients desiring to complete their six hours of behind-the-wheel training and an increased number of students and driving schools requesting extensions to the course completion deadline dates. In fact, 16 percent of all scholarship recipients (750 out of 4,786) requested and were granted an extension to their scholarship redemption deadline date in order to have more time to complete their driving training course. Students can normally request a 60-day extension to the course completion deadline date and since the beginning of the pandemic, the Commission has granted extensions for up to 150 days. This backlog will likely be further compounded by the passage of HB 466 (2021-2022 Session and effective July 1st, 2021) which requires 17-year-olds to complete Joshua's Law driver training prior to being issued a Class D driver's license. The full impact of COVID-19 on the GDEC Driver's Education program cannot be determined at the time of this report.

GDEC AUTHORIZED PROVIDERS AND SCHOLARSHIPS REDEEMED

In fiscal year 2021, 58 authorized GDEC providers served 4,786 scholarship recipients⁶ across 125 locations. The total value of the scholarships redeemed in FY2021 valued \$ 2,045,268.47 and the average cost per scholarship recipient was \$ 427.34.

Table 1 below provides a listing of the driver's education providers participating in the program, with the number of training locations operated by each provider, the number of scholarships redeemed by each provider, the financial value of the scholarships redeemed, and the average cost per recipient for each FY2021 provider.

Table 1. Number of Scholarships Redeemed, Value of Scholarships Redeemed, and Average Cost Per Recipient by Authorized GDEC Provider, FY2021

FY2021 Authorized GDEC Provider	Number of Locations	Number of Scholarships Redeemed	Value of Scholarships Redeemed	Average Cost Per Recipient
A-1 Driving School, Inc.	19	1,005	\$427,065	\$ 425
Barber's Driving School, Inc.	1	291	\$144,045	\$ 495
West Metro Driving School	1	250	\$112,500	\$ 450
A+ Driving Services, Inc.	7	242	\$119,790	\$ 495
New London School of Driving Inc.	1	180	\$89,100	\$ 495
Taggart's Driving School	3	121	\$60,195	\$ 497

⁶ The measures taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Georgia resulted in an increase in requests for 60-day or 150-day extensions to complete their driver's training among the GDEC student scholarship recipients.

FY2021 Authorized GDEC Provider	Number of Locations	Number of Scholarships Redeemed	Value of Scholarships Redeemed	Average Cost Per Recipient
Wiregrass Georgia Technical College	4	114	\$39,900	\$ 350
South Cherokee/Jasper Driver Improvement Clinic Inc.	1	111	\$49,950	\$ 450
Advance Driving Academy	1	108	\$41,040	\$ 380
Brock's Driver Education School, Inc.	1	108	\$48,600	\$ 450
Central Georgia Technical College	2	105	\$36,750	\$ 350
Southern Regional Technical College	3	104	\$36,400	\$ 350
Marietta City Board of Education	1	99	\$47,421	\$ 479
Southern Crescent Technical College	4	99	\$34,650	\$ 350
Kennesaw Driving School	1	98	\$48,510	\$ 495
DriveSmartGeorgia.com	3	72	\$35,928	\$ 499
Coastal Pines Technical College	1	71	\$24,850	\$ 350
Georgia Driving School, Inc.	1	71	\$30,175	\$ 425
The Wiser Driver	1	71	\$30,530	\$ 430
Classic VIP Driving School, LLC	1	70	\$27,918	\$ 399
Jones Driver Education School of Augusta, Inc.	1	70	\$31,500	\$ 450
A Driving Advantage	1	70	\$32,550	\$ 465
Gwinnett County Board of Education	11	69	\$23,805	\$ 345
Southeastern Regional Driving and Safety Academy Inc	1	69	\$27,255	\$ 395
Ogeechee Technical College	2	63	\$21,700	\$ 344
Savannah Technical College	4	63	\$22,050	\$ 350
AA Academy of Action Driving School	1	62	\$31,000	\$ 500
Augusta Technical College	1	58	\$20,300	\$ 350
Nathan's Driving School, Inc.	2	57	\$28,393	\$ 498
Georgia Northwestern Technical College	3	56	\$19,600	\$ 350
Albany Technical College	1	55	\$19,250	\$ 350
Just Driver Training	1	51	\$25,375	\$ 498
Lanier Technical College	5	50	\$17,500	\$ 350

FY2021 Authorized GDEC Provider	Number of Locations	Number of Scholarships Redeemed	Value of Scholarships Redeemed	Average Cost Per Recipient
West Georgia Technical College	1	50	\$17,500	\$ 350
A-ABACUS DUI and Defensive Driving School	2	47	\$23,500	\$ 500
North Georgia Technical College	3	46	\$16,100	\$ 350
Georgia Piedmont Technical College	1	40	\$14,000	\$ 350
Dickerson Driving School, Inc.	2	38	\$18,885	\$ 497
Atlanta Technical College	1	35	\$12,250	\$ 350
FB Driving, Inc.	1	34	\$13,250	\$ 390
Oconee Fall Line Technical College	3	32	\$11,200	\$ 350
Duluth DUI and Driving School	1	30	\$14,340	\$ 478
Southern Defensive Driving School	1	27	\$10,665	\$ 395
Safe America Foundation, Inc.	1	25	\$11,850	\$ 474
South Georgia Technical College	2	25	\$8,750	\$ 350
Oconee County Board of Education	1	23	\$9,199	\$ 400
Towne Lake Driving School, LLC	1	20	\$9,700	\$ 485
Columbus Technical College	2	20	\$7,000	\$ 350
Athens Technical College	1	18	\$6,300	\$ 350
1 Act Driving School	1	17	\$6,239	\$ 367
Calhoun City Schools	1	17	\$4,930	\$ 290
1st United Driving & DUI School	1	14	\$7,000	\$ 500
White County Board of Education	1	13	\$3,575	\$ 275
Drive Again Driving School	1	11	\$4,950	\$ 450
Southeastern Technical College	2	11	\$3,850	\$ 350
Rockdale-Newton Driving School	1	7	\$3,465	\$ 495
All Star Driver Education, Inc.	1	2	\$700	\$ 350
Executive Results DUI & Defensive Driving School, LLC	1	1	\$475	\$ 475
FY 2021 TOTAL	113	4,786	\$ 2,045,268.47	\$ 427.34



"My daughter is learning everything she needs from teachers who take their time and actually teach. We would not have been able to have gotten everything taught to her that they have. The hands-on driving with an instructor is what a young driver needs. It makes it a more serious and honest experience when there's not the emotional attachment of parent to child.." - Kristen (Tucker, GA)

Funding History

According to O.C.G.A. § 15-21-181, it is the intent of the General Assembly that, subject to appropriation, an amount equal to such proceeds received from such fines in any fiscal year shall be made available during the following fiscal year to the Commission. In other words, the amount of funds collected in any fiscal year is appropriated to the Commission for the following fiscal year.

The amount of funding collected in FY2021 decreased by 6 percent (\$159,989.33 less dollars) from \$2,649,638.73 in FY2020 to \$2,489,649.40 in FY2021. This equates to approximately 320-375 scholarships becoming unavailable in FY2022, based on the maximum scholarship award amount of (\$500) and the FY2021 average cost per scholarship (\$427.35).

Table 2 shows the amount of funds collected and appropriated to the Commission from FY2017 to FY2021.

Table 2. Amounts of Funds Collected and Amount of Funds Appropriated to the Commission by Fiscal Year

Fiscal Year	Amounts of Funds Collected	Amount of Funds Appropriated to the Commission
FY 2017	\$ 3,095,265.70	\$ 3,313,516.00
FY 2018	\$ 3,004,583.70	\$ 3,095,265.70
FY 2019	\$ 2,978,971.10	\$ 3,004,583.70
FY 2020	\$ 2,649,638.73	\$ 2,978,971.10
FY 2021	\$2,489,649.40	\$ 2,649,638.73





Georgia Driver's Education Commission

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