

The purpose of the following report (one of six) is to orient readers to the professional skills and potential contributions of Nonprofit and Advocacy Professionals for advancing Vision Zero. These reports were produced by the 2022 – 2023 NC Vision Zero Capstone team at UNC-Chapel Hill and are the result of a sector-specific landscape scan and interviews with experts in the field.

# The Diverse Roles of Nonprofit and Advocacy Professionals in Achieving Vision Zero

## Introduction

Vision Zero is a growing movement throughout the United States to eliminate all traffic-related deaths and serious injuries and to ensure the safe and equitable mobility for all road users, no matter how they get around. This approach to transportation safety requires collaboration among diverse groups of professionals, working in collaboration with communities to ensure transportation decision-making is evidence-driven and equitable across diverse road users. The diverse groups and coalitions needed to support Vision Zero implementation include local traffic planners, engineers, policy makers, public health professionals, emergency responders, community members, and other key partners.

## The Nonprofit/Advocacy Sector

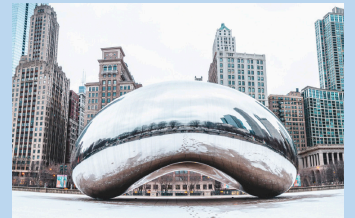
Nonprofits and advocacy groups play a pivotal role in road safety by elevating the voices of community members and increasing community involvement in decision-making processes. These groups and professionals often have critical relationships with those living in communities most impacted by traffic related harms and disparities. Nonprofits and advocacy groups are uniquely situated to highlight the harms that are experienced by marginalized communities in the policy development process and elevate community voices. In addition, advocacy and nonprofit groups can emphasize the need for equity-oriented plans, programs, and policies within Vision Zero taskforces and initiatives. These groups can also demonstrate the impacts of historic and ongoing structural racism and underinvestment in built environments that have led to a disparate impacts of traffic-related injuries and deaths.

“While there is a lot of focus right now on crash safety in Vision Zero, I feel like a lot of our work is focused much more broadly on mobility access. Crashes are one tiny piece of the larger picture of how people aren't able to get around.”

– Nonprofit / Advocacy Professional

## Case Study #1

In 2017, the Vision Zero Chicago, IL Action Plan and Implementation Strategy included a strong emphasis on traffic enforcement strategies in mostly low and middle-income communities of color on the West and South sides of the city. An advocacy coalition formed of nonprofit and community-based organizations, including Equiticity, which led an outreach and marketing campaign to influence Chicago city and transportation officials to reprioritize the Plan's actions, including a de-emphasis on traffic enforcement in communities of color, due to community concern.



## Case Study #2

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation decided to reconsider plans for National Avenue in Milwaukee as a result of advocates. National Avenue in Milwaukee is an essential corridor for several neighborhoods, yet there are no bicycle lanes, safe crossings, or green spaces. Nonprofit organizations such as [Wisconsin Bike Fed](#) are advocating for the safe design of National Avenue to include increased sidewalk space, protected bicycle lanes, and improved traffic controls.



# How Nonprofit/Advocacy Can Support Vision Zero

## Leadership

- Increasing coalition and advocacy presence in spaces where traffic and road safety decision-making occurs
- Seeking partnerships with other agencies and sectors that are involved in road safety work
- Implementing organizational equity values and initiatives
- Elevating the voices and experiences of those most affected by road violence

## Resources

- Consulting with other partners to develop local initiatives that advance equitable outcomes
- Connecting with hard-to reach populations for more accurate, equitable data collection efforts

## Skills and Knowledge

- Advocating for equity and anti-racist frameworks within road safety initiatives
- Diversifying representation and leadership within nonprofit and advocacy organizations
- Sharing first-hand knowledge of local “hot spots” or victim narratives

## Community Engagement

- Organizing community concerns through information gathering
- Mobilizing community members and providing tools
- Facilitating conversations between community members and partners
- Connecting the community with resources and information that contribute to advocacy and mobilization efforts

## Policy Advocacy

- Translating research and elevating community level concerns during the policy-making process
- Advocating for communities of color, people with disabilities, people with language barriers, people who are undocumented, and other groups disparately impacted by transportation-related injuries and fatalities

## Research

- Demonstrating impacts of structural racism and community under investment on road safety enforcement and outcomes
- Analyzing the impact of policies on marginalized communities
- Conducting research that demonstrates lived experiences of those disproportionately impacted by traffic-related injuries and fatalities

## Case Study #3

[Families for Safe Streets](#) was founded in 2014 by the families of loved ones who were killed or injured in crashes in New York City. By sharing their stories and experiences, the group has been able to mobilize public support for Vision Zero policies and initiatives, while also holding elected officials and city agencies accountable for ensuring the safety of all road users. After building a coalition of over 300 organizations and developing creative advocacy techniques directed at a state senator, the group won its #EverySchool campaign for speed safety cameras, the nation’s largest automated enforcement program of its kind.



## Key Resources for Nonprofit and Advocacy Professionals Interested in Learning More About Vision Zero



- [Vision Zero Core Elements Summary](#)
- [Mobility Justice: The Politics of Movement in an Age of Extremes](#)
- [TransitCenter Equity Database](#)
- [Vision Zero Equity Strategies for Practitioners](#)

“I think there’s still a profound lack of awareness in transportation spaces about how many people don’t have easy access to driving. Whether that be because of a disability or income or documentation or aging out of driving [or] being too young to drive. There [are] so many people for whom the system doesn’t work particularly well. And yet that isn’t really reflected in the people who are making decisions.”

– Nonprofit / Advocacy Professional



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