# Federal Railroad Administration's Suicide Prevention Research Program

**Presented by:** Starr Kidda, PhD, Human Factors Division Chief, Federal Railroad Administration



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# Presented at the DuPage Railroad Safety Council's Prevent Tragedy on the Tracks

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#### FRA and Volpe Railroad Suicide Prevention Program

- 1. Outreach
- 2. Data Analysis
- 3. Countermeasure Development, Implementation, and Evaluation





#### **Railroad Suicide Prevention: Outreach**

#### **Global Railway Alliance for Suicide Prevention (GRASP)**

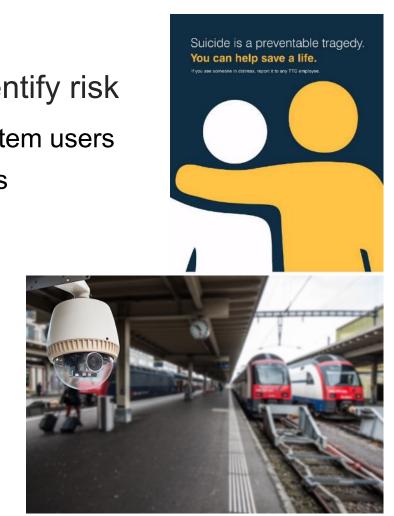
- Who: International researchers and railroad representatives with knowledge or insight about suicides on railroad ROWs
- **Purpose**: Share information and coordinate efforts to better understand why suicides on the railroad occur and what mitigation strategies are effective at reducing their prevalence and/or impact



U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Railroad Administration

#### Global Railway Alliance for Suicide Prevention (GRASP)

- Impact of language precision
- Identify those at risk and intervene train staff to identify risk
  - Train as broadly as possible, since many staff are also system users
  - Ask station attendants to also look out for certain behaviors
- Encourage ridership engagement
- Use Intelligent CCTV systems
  - Review CCTV footage to understand behaviors before suicide attempt
  - Install intelligent CCTV systems that send an alarm to train control center where personnel can see what is on the camera and decide on action



# Changes in Rate and/or Characteristics of Suicide Incidents due to COVID-19

- Participants reported a range of impacts on rates
  - UK: initial reduction in rail suicide which has since rebounded to previous levels
  - The Netherlands and Sweden: numbers similar to last year, despite reductions in train movements
  - Canada (Toronto): highest number of suicides in 11 years over the first 6 months of 2020
- Mixture of concern and optimism about what will happen following the pandemic
- Concern about stresses of isolation and job loss and potential increases in suicide rates, but also optimism about a shared sense of community that could buffer some of that effect













# Updates on Existing or Planned Suicide Mitigation Efforts; Impact of COVID-19 on Efforts

- Interventions involving person-to-person contact were maintained
  - Initially seen as risky, but benefits outweighed risks
- Some have pushed in-person training efforts online; others have identified classrooms that can help maintain distancing
- The Netherlands developed a nationwide effort to gather real-time information about suicide deaths
- The US discussed a suicide prevention grant program



### FRA Railroad Trespassing Suicide Prevention Grant Program

#### **Eligible Applicants**

 An organization in the U.S. that focuses on suicide prevention and/or mental health assistance that can implement an outreach campaign for reducing suicide involving railroad trespassing

Accepting Applications

#### Available Funding: \$293,000

 Maximum award per grant: \$100,000

#### Applicants' Federal Funding Request: \$1.8 million

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Overview: This program provides \$293,000 for targeted outreach campaigns to reduce the number of railroad-related suicides that involve railroad trespassing. FRA will award funds to projects that achieve maximum benefits
possible, thereby meeting, in part, several milestones in its National Strategy to Prevent Trespassing on Railroad

https://railroads.dot.gov/grants-loans/competitive-discretionary-grantprograms/railroad-trespassing-suicide-prevention-grant

### Invitation: U.S. Railroad Suicide Prevention Working Group

If you would like to get involved or get more information, please contact:

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#### **Railroad Suicide Prevention Research Program Contacts**

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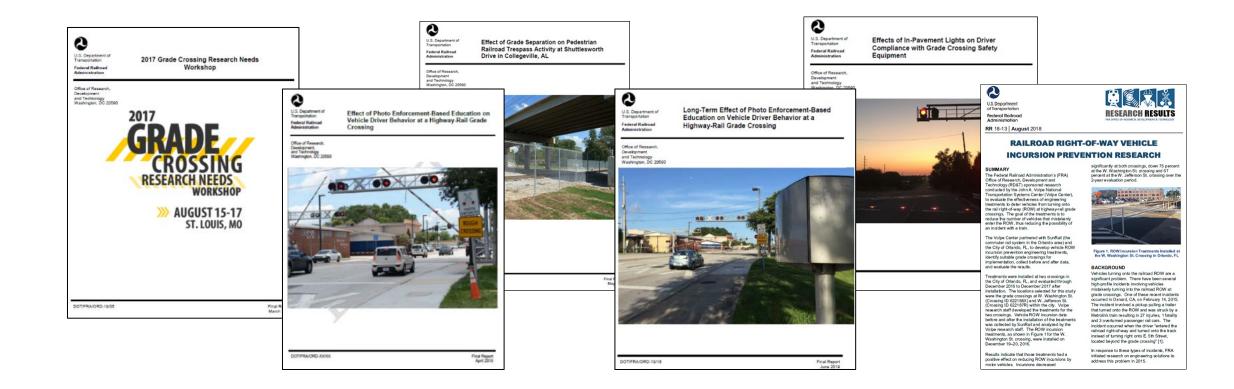
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#### FRA References

• FRA Research Repository







# CONTACT US

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For more information visit us at www.fra.dot.gov



