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Fatal DUI Numbers Higher Among Young Drivers in San Diego County; District Attorney Using Grant to Target DUI Offenders

San Diego County District Attorney [Summer Stephan](#) announced today that her office is receiving an \$899,425 grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety for the eleventh year in a row to prevent and prosecute impaired driving deaths and DUI-drug cases. The grant award comes as San Diego County fatal DUI numbers remain at an all-time high.

In 2023, 32 people were killed in 29 DUI-related crashes. So far in 2024, there have been 25 people killed in 20 DUI-related crashes.

“I am grateful our office has continued to receive this grant that allows our specialized team of prosecutors and investigators to hold offenders accountable and work to deter impaired driving,” DA Stephan said. “Every year we have an unacceptable amount of fatal DUIs. As the holiday season approaches, people need to make responsible choices, use ride sharing services and keep their friends and family from getting behind the wheel if they are impaired.”

Data shows that the number of young drivers involved in fatal DUI-related crashes has increased this past year. Prosecutors say that more than half of the individuals charged with DUI homicide offenses in 2024 were between the age of 18 and 26 at the time of the collision.

The grant will allow the DA’s DUI Homicide Unit to continue its critical work, including education and prevention efforts within the community. The unit, which launched in 2014, streamlines complex DUI cases by creating expertise within the DA’s Office. The specialized unit creates uniformity in sentencing among the four adult courthouses. In addition, the unit helps law enforcement adapt to changes in technology by having a designated DA Investigator who is trained in the latest techniques in collision reconstruction. Since its inception, the unit has prosecuted nearly 250 cases and they have received more than \$5 million in funding from the Office of Traffic Safety.

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Funding will also be used to:

- Provide education for young drivers about the dangers of DUI-driving.
- Provide training for select prosecutors to become experts in DUI-drug cases.
- Provide training for prosecutors and investigators through California's Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor Program as well as San Diego County specific training.
- Host quarterly regional meetings with law enforcement partners to improve DUI investigations and prosecutions.

In 2023, the District Attorney's Office filed 3,916 DUI cases, including 234 DUI drug cases. As of September 30, 2024, the DA's Office has filed 4,389 DUI cases including 280 DUI drug cases this year. Many of these numbers are significant increases from years past.

Funding from the California Office of Traffic Safety is provided through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The grant program runs through September 2025.

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About the San Diego County District Attorney's Office

The San Diego County DA's Office prosecutes all felony crimes in the county and misdemeanor crimes committed outside the City of San Diego. The office files about 40,000 criminal cases a year and balances prosecution with numerous crime prevention programs. District Attorney Summer Stephan leads the office of more than 1,000 dedicated employees who pursue fair and equal justice, and support victims daily across San Diego County.

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